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LECTURES

ON



DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY, ELECTION, THE
ATONEMENT, JUSTIFICATION,
AND REGENERATION.

20

BY GEORGE PAYNE, LL.D.,
EXETER.

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TO THOSE
YOUNG MINISTERS,
WITH WHOM IT HAS BEEN THE WRITER'S HAPPINESS
TO BE CONNECTED
IN THE INTERESTING RELATION OF TUTOR,

This Volume,
CONTAINING THE SUBSTANCE
OF WHAT
HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THEM IN ANOTHER SHAPE,
IS
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,
BY
THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE volume now presented to the public was designed to be explanatory rather than controversial. To a certain extent, indeed, it could not fail to assume the latter character, since it seldom happens that correct general principles can be developed and established without controversy. The exposition of truth has, however, been the great object of the author, and controversy has never been resorted to except when it seemed to him essential to a full development of the truth. The writer may be mistaken—he would fain hope that he is so—yet he has not been able to escape the conviction, that, in the present day, there does not exist, among the members of the church of Christ at large, a sufficiently correct and comprehensive knowledge of first principles in religion—of the leading doctrines of the gospel. He is not without his fears, that even many Christians hold rather a form of sound words—though even the form held by some is not a very accurate one—than possess an acquaintance with things; nor can he altogether divest himself of the apprehension, that, if a moral deluge were to sweep away our accustomed words and phraseology on religious subjects, it would not, in very numerous instances, leave many ideas behind it. It is at least certain that we have less of extensive reading, of vigorous thinking, and of profound meditation, upon the great principles of theological science, in all its branches, than in the

"olden times." The days of John Owen and John Howe, in this respect, are gone by. He is constrained to think, that this deficiency, result from what cause it may, is most deeply to be regretted. It is truth, not words, that constitutes the food of the soul. If the orthodoxy of an individual, or of a body of Christians, be a mere orthodoxy of phraseology—if there be not found among the members of the body right ideas, and correct and luminous thinking, as well as right words—there can be no spiritual growth. They cannot rise to eminence in experimental and practical religion. It is a sentiment which deserves to be most seriously pondered upon by the church in the present day, that the real piety of an age, though it may doubtless fall considerably short, can never be in advance of the knowledge of that age. Imperfect conceptions of the great system of evangelical truth—obscure notions of any of its radical principles—a defective acquaintance with the connexions of its various parts, will render the piety of an age—not much less certainly and rapidly than positive error—deformed, or stunted and dwarfish. It will give existence to all kinds of monstrosities, or produce a race of religious pigmies. The generation that has passed away were men of extensive reading and deep reflection; but they were not men of vigorous action. We have become men of action, but it is to be feared we have partially ceased to be men of research and meditation. We *do* more, but we *think* less, and *know* less than our forefathers; and there is consequent danger that the present vigour of action may decline, or that it may become necessary to seek to perpetuate—by the constant application of stimulants and excitement—those exertions which ought to flow from steady, and enlightened, and holy principle, and which can be permanently calculated upon only when they spring from that source. It will be well for the church of the present day not to undervalue the extensive

research and deep-toned thinking of former generations, but to connect with the knowledge of the past century the activity of the present—to become more perfectly familiar with the principles which should keep the whole machinery in motion, lest we be thrown back again into that inactive and inglorious position from which we have scarcely as yet reason to exult that we have made our escape.

The author of this volume presents to his readers what he hopes will be found to be a correct and luminous exposition of these first principles in religion on which it professes to treat. He has endeavoured to avoid that vagueness of statement in which some writers, of great eminence and excellence, have unwisely and unfortunately permitted themselves to indulge—to remove ambiguities—to give precision to the definition of terms—to explain the meaning of current, though often very ill understood phraseology, as well as occasionally to correct it;—and, though Calvinistic in his own views, he has tried every sentiment, supported in this volume, not by the statements of John Calvin, but by those of Jesus Christ and his apostles. He dares not venture to affirm, or even to hope, that he has escaped all sectional and denominational prejudices; but he can honestly say, that he is not conscious of having been influenced in his statements by any such prejudices. His sincere desire has been, or he is greatly self-deceived, to elicit, exhibit, and establish the truth; and, whether the force of conviction has carried him along in precisely the same course with that in which the great Genevese Reformer moved, or compelled him occasionally to deviate from it, has been to him a point of very inconsiderable importance. To the law, and to the testimony, he has uniformly desired to bring his own mind, and the minds of his readers. If we think not “according to this word, it is because there is no light in us.”

The author begs to say, in conclusion, that the work is not especially, far less exclusively, designed for those who sustain the sacred office. He has not the presumption to set himself forth as the public instructor of a body of men comprising numerous individuals, at whose feet he should be glad to sit and learn. To his younger brethren in the ministry the book may, indeed, and he hopes will, afford some instruction; but the sentiments expressed in the former part of this preface will prepare the way for the declaration, that his leading object has been to awaken a greater spirit of reading and research among the members of the church at large, and to put into their hands a volume which might tend, with the blessing of God, to promote generally a more correct and familiar acquaintance with the great principles on which it treats than perhaps at present prevails.

To the kind and careful consideration of the members of the church, and to the blessing of its great and glorified Head, he commends the volume.

ACADEMY HOUSE,

May, 1836.

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LECTURE I.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

THE term sovereignty, taken in its most general and comprehensive sense, denotes, when we speak of God, *his right to do whatever seems good in his sight*. It doubtless includes the prerogative of acting towards the creatures whom he has formed (we speak not now, it must be observed, of accountable beings) as he pleases. But it clearly comprehends much more than this; for he had a right to create, or not to create. That stupendous act of power which gave existence to the first beings and worlds, was an act of high sovereignty. No creature can possess any claim upon God before it exists; it must consequently derive its being from the mere good pleasure of its Creator. Jehovah owed it to himself alone to emerge from that state in which he had existed before the beginning—to exhibit, in the mighty wonders which his hand has wrought, his own most perfect character, and then to form a race of beings capable of appreciating its excellence, and of bearing some resemblance to the God who made them. To Divine sovereignty must then be traced the determination to create, as well as the subsequent act of creation itself. And, when the determination to create, to speak after the manner of men, had arisen in the mind of the Deity, it is further manifest that the kind and manner of existence to be imparted to every creature—the qualities and powers to be conferred upon it,—whether it should be constituted an organized or an un-organized being,—whether it should possess life or not,—and, if the former, whether it should enjoy vegetable or animal life,—whether it should be endowed with instinct merely, or with reason, connecting with it accountability—it is manifest that all these points must have fallen under the exclusive determination of sovereignty.

If Jehovah did not owe even existence to the mineral, the animal, the man, it is even yet more obvious that he could not owe to the first, organization; to the second, life; to the third, rationality. Thus, in the bestowment of existence, and of these varied forms of existence, the Creator exercised his right to do whatever seems good in his sight.

Again, when beings, endowed with diversified qualities and powers, have been brought into existence, the Creator has a right, by virtue of his relation to them, to bestow those means of enjoyment, and to exact that measure of service, which he chooses to impart, and to require. The communication of existence, and of a certain mode of existence, to any being, cannot surely render God a debtor to that being: (still we speak not, let it not be forgotten, of accountable creatures.) The bestowment of one favour cannot confer a right upon the recipient to demand another. It is hence manifest, that the existence, and the kind of matter, to be found in any part of the universe,—that the life, and manner of life, enjoyed by the plant, and the animal,—the faculties, the comfort, the duration of being, in the case of the latter—are all to be traced to Divine sovereignty; they are manifestations and exercises of God's inalienable right to do whatever seems good in his sight.

There is thus nothing exterior to God himself to control the Divine operations. They are, however, controlled by his own perfections. All those primary acts of sovereignty, to which reference has been made, were put forth under the guidance of his own most perfect and blessed nature; and every subsequent act of sovereignty must, it is manifest, be in entire accordance with that nature. Now the nature of God is love; and, consequently, the Divine sovereignty—or the right to do what he pleases, which we have ascribed to God—resolves itself into the blessed and holy prerogative to manifest the essential benevolence of his nature in any way that seems good to him. Thus sovereignty becomes the source of good to the creature, and of good *only*. It is manifestly impossible that evil should flow, previously to the existence of a moral system, from the Fountain of perfect

benevolence. We must not forget, however, that sovereignty is the source of good, exclusively of evil, merely on account of the benevolent character of the Creator, and not on account of any supposed right to the enjoyment of good on the part of the creature; for such right can only exist in connexion with a moral system. God derives his right to do what he will with the beings whom he creates, from the relation which he bears to them. It does not rest upon the benevolence of his character; it would not be annihilated by a malevolent character. I am well aware how impossible it is to conceive of malevolence in connexion with that Being who "is blessed for ever." Yet an extreme case may be put, for the sake of illustrating a principle. Let us then admit, for a moment, the monstrous supposition of a malevolent Creator! Would he not, even in that case, retain his relation of Creator?—and, with it, a right to do with the creature as he might choose? How can it be doubted? "The potter," whatever be his character, "has power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour." It may possibly be objected that the Creator cannot have a right to make an *innocent* creature miserable. We do not say he has. But the objection falsely and absurdly assumes (an assumption overlooked even by Dr. Williams) the existence of innocence without a moral system; whereas nothing can be more manifest than that both guilt and innocence owe their existence to a moral system. We never speak, except figuratively, of an innocent beast, because a mere animal is not a subject of moral government. The Creator cannot be unkind to the animal, *because he is benevolent*; but, to deny his abstract right to deal with it as he chooses, is to remove that right from the foundation on which the Scriptures uniformly rest it, viz., his relation to it as Creator, and to place it on another ground. The reader is therefore again requested to observe, that sovereignty becomes the source of unmingled good, solely on account of the benevolent character of the Creator. He is good; he pleases accordingly to do good; and, therefore, "his tender mercies are over all his works."

The great end of God in creation was to promote his own glory, i. e., to unfold his character, that it might become the object of admiration, and love, and confidence; as well as the instrumental cause of moral purity, to beings capable of perceiving and appreciating its infinite excellence. To secure this purpose it was necessary to form a more elevated order of beings than any we have as yet referred to; beings endowed with intellectual and moral powers, with understanding, affections, conscience, will, freedom of choice, &c. The possession of these powers—inseparably connected as they are with accountability—led by necessary consequence to the establishment of a system of moral government; the subjects of which are neither impelled by physical force to fulfil the great ends of their being, not prompted by instinct, as in the case of brutes; but, receiving intelligible directions from their Maker in reference to the conduct they should adopt, have certain inducements presented to their view, adapted to operate upon the powers with which their minds are endowed, and thus to secure a voluntary obedience to the law under which they are placed.

Now it will be perceived that the establishment of a system of moral government gives room for the development of another principle in the Divine conduct; for the inducements to obedience, to which we have just referred, are in reality promises of great ultimate good in case of obedience, and threatenings of great ultimate evil, in case of disobedience. In the judgment of the moral Governor, the unerring standard of moral obligation, this good and this evil constitute what ought to be experienced by the obedient and the rebellious subjects of his government. Thus moral government affords opportunity for the display of the principle of equity, whose distinguishing and exclusive office it is, to give to all the subjects of the government the precise measure, either of good or of evil, which they deserve.

It is further evident that the institution of this kind of government, does not merely afford an opportunity for the development of equity, but that it brings the Divine conduct towards the subjects of that government under the habitual

control of that principle. "The whole aspect of God's ways, in regard to them, is changed," says Mr. Hinton, "from sovereignty to equity. Had nothing existed but his natural dominion, all would have been characterized by sovereignty; but as he has seen good to establish a moral government, of its whole range, equity is the necessary distinction. Then he would have treated his creatures as he pleased, that is, with unmixed kindness; now he will treat them as they deserve." Then he might have bestowed upon them any measure of good which he chose to impart; now he can bestow, except in special cases, that measure only which they merit by obedience.

It must, however, be especially observed, that though the establishment of a moral system thus controls the principle of sovereignty, it does not annihilate it, nor absolutely prevent its development towards the subjects of that system. Were the case otherwise, mercy would be totally, and for ever, excluded from the system. The fall of Adam must have entailed irreversible condemnation upon the whole race; since nothing can be more apparent than that mere equity cannot save a transgressor. The institution of moral government subjects the Divine sovereignty to control, only to that degree which is necessary to secure the purposes of that government. Within this limit it is perfectly free to expiate. Sovereignty may be displayed even where equity would seem to forbid, if it can be done without defeating, or injuriously interfering with, the ends of that government. The great Eternal can never absolutely give away his right to do good. In the case of universal transgression, for instance, when the exercise of sovereignty would seem, at first view, to be absolutely precluded, if some method can be devised by which the efficiency of the law, and the consequent stability of the government, can be as effectually sustained, while pardon is bestowed upon a part of the race, as if vengeance had been inflicted upon the whole, then may the heart of sovereignty indulge its gracious promptings;—then may the hand of special grace lead "a multitude which no man can number," cleansed from their sins "in the blood of the Lamb," to the foot of the eternal

throne, and into the immediate presence of that great Being who occupies it.

The preceding statements are adapted to teach us, First, that we must not confound the sovereignty with the supremacy of God. There is a nice distinction in meaning, between the two terms. God will exercise his supremacy over fallen angels, and apostate men, at the termination of the present system, but not his sovereignty; their punishment will be the unmingled infliction of equity. The term supremacy points to the rank and station of God. It intimates that he is possessed of authority over all beings, and all worlds; that he exercises uncontrollable dominion over the creatures which he has formed. It supposes the existence of beings to be governed, and it is his actual government of them. The term sovereignty, though doubtless used loosely to denote the dominion of God, carries us back, as we have seen, to a period anterior to the creation. God, strictly speaking, was not supreme till he had created,—as a man cannot be a ruler without subjects, or a father without children; but he was a sovereign in the very act of creation. It was his sovereignty, not his supremacy, which led to the act—which directed as to the kind and manner of existence to be imparted—and which bestowed upon the different orders of beings formed by him, all the blessings they enjoyed; for, on account of the infinite benevolence of his nature, sovereignty becomes to them the source of unmingled good.

Secondly, that we must be careful not to conceive of Divine sovereignty as approximating in the slightest degree to arbitrariness, or capriciousness, in the current acceptation of the words. It is to be feared that many have fallen into this mistake; that there has been a proneness, at least in some quarters, to regard it as a right to act without reason, and even in opposition to law. It becomes us to oppose all such conceptions of the Divine conduct and government. They are infinitely dishonourable to God. To act without reason is the part of a fool or a madman. That be far from the great Eternal. It is doubtless the case that his conduct is often inscrutable to us. How should it be otherwise? What but infinite wisdom

can comprehend the plans of an infinite mind? Who but God can explain the reasons of his conduct? No one. Yet he has reasons. The very highest act of sovereignty, is not a sovereign act in the sense now opposed, and which too many attach to the term. His essential and infinite goodness is ever developed under the guidance of infinite wisdom, and perfect holiness. If he choose the Jews to be the depositaries of the light of revelation, and leave the Gentiles for a season in the darkness which they had chosen;—if he elect one man to life, and permit another to pursue his own course to eternal death, there is beyond all question a sufficient reason for these acts of choice; though I will not venture to affirm that, even by the light of eternity, it will be fully disclosed.

Thirdly, that sovereignty is a source from which, in a moral system, nothing but good can proceed. It is not a fountain whence issue sweet waters and bitter. It is never employed in afflicting, and cursing, and destroying the creatures to whom it imparts existence, without reason, and in opposition to law, or even in conformity with law; but in pouring upon them a stream of blessings, irrespectively of their deserts, and, in some cases, in opposition to their deserts. It is the actual source, and it *only* can be the source of all the good existing in the system beyond what equity demands; but it is not required as a cause, nor is it the actual cause of any of the evils suffered by those who are connected with the system. Evil of all kinds manifestly springs from another fountain—the fountain of equity. The punishment threatened and inflicted, in the whole range of God's moral government, is the just desert of the transgressor; and it is the office of equity, not of sovereignty, to render to any individual his due. Why should we embarrass ourselves and the subject by retaining the self-contradictory phrases, "sovereign justice, sovereign punishment," (a mode of expression which, in point of absurdity, stands on a level with the phrase "equitable mercy,") and thus represent the punishment as having its source in the mere pleasure of God, i. e., as not being required by the nature of the case? Why do this, when there is another source—the principle of equity—from which it must neces-

sarily spring, unless sovereignty lay the hand of merciful restraint upon its operation? And how can we venture to utter so foul a libel upon the God of love, as to affirm that any suffering can exist in his moral government, which is not to be proximately traced to the defect or transgression of its subjects?

It is conceived to be a point of great importance to form correct conceptions on this subject, and to keep steadily in view the respective provinces of equity and sovereignty, in the conduct of God towards rational and accountable agents. The former gives to all the measure, both of good and of evil, that is due to them. This is its appropriate and exclusive province. It cannot move in the slightest degree beyond it; sovereignty has nothing whatever to do with it. The latter, on the other hand, bestows good—good exclusively—and good beyond the desert of its recipient. In a case in which evil is suffered by a subject of moral government, the Divine proceedings may develop both equity and sovereignty. Should the full amount of the suffering due to him not be inflicted, there is a manifest display of both. Yet, even in this case, the respective province of each may be perceived with great distinctness. The measure of evil endured is to be traced to the exercise of justice; the portion short of the desert of the transgressor, which he is not required to suffer, is held back by the hand of sovereignty. Equity punishes, as far as the punishment goes; sovereignty spares the full infliction.

I beg permission of the reader to fortify my own statements by the following quotations, which are both adapted to confirm them, and to throw additional light upon the subject.

“The punishment, even of the guilty,” says Dr. Williams, “(much less of the innocent,) is not an object of Divine sovereignty. To punish the guilty is the office of equity, which gives to all their due. For mercy to punish, or justice to confer undeserved favour, is discordant in thought and language; but not more so than sovereign punishment,—without assuming some other meaning of the term, or disputing about words. In brief, as equity never disapproves of any creature, especially a moral agent, where there is nothing wrong, or no

desert; so Divine sovereignty is in no case employed but for the welfare of its object." (Equity and Sovereignty, 2nd edition, pp. 126, 127.)

"By sovereignty," says Dr. Fletcher, "I do not mean the mere supremacy and dominion of God as the natural and moral Governor of the world; but I conceive the term is more appropriate in its application, when restricted to the dispensation of grace; the display of free and unmerited favour to those who cannot deserve it, and who have, in themselves, no reason to expect it. It is only in this part of the Divine administration that any scope can be afforded for the exercise of sovereignty. In the infliction of punishment, justice takes its course; it is the revelation of the righteous judgment of God; it is the award of equitable retribution; the reasons for that award exist in the character and criminality of the sufferer, and it is unnecessary to seek for any other reason."—"In the determination to punish sinners, as well as in the punishment itself, we perceive the process of legal distribution; the character of the guilty accounts for their doom. We cannot resolve this act of the Divine will in the same way in which we ascribe to that will the bestowment of mercy. It may be the will of the legislator, the governor, the judge; but it is not the will of the Sovereign; it arises not from the mere good pleasure of God." In a note attached to a later edition of the admirable sermon, (Spiritual Blessings,) from which the above passages are quoted, Dr. F. says, "If the term were in future excluded from other applications, and considered only as describing that perfection from which mercy emanates, what injury would result to the system of Divine truth, or to the nomenclature of theology?"

To this question of Dr. F.'s, I have no hesitation in replying, that the restriction of the term sovereignty to cases in which good is communicated without an equitable claim, would not only prove uninjurious, but would tend to remove some of that hostile feeling with which the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty is apt to be regarded. Much of that feeling has its foundation in mistake or misrepresentation. It is too commonly thought by our opponents, that we, in advocating the sovereignty of Jehovah, practically avow our belief that he has

a right to appoint, and actually exercises the right of appointing, some of the subjects of his moral government to the endurance of misery—perhaps final, eternal misery—without any reason on their part for such an appointment. I take the liberty of assuring them, in the name of my brethren, that we believe no such thing. We maintain, that conduct, such as they mistakingly imagine we set ourselves to defend, would be flagrant injustice, gross and detestable cruelty, not sovereignty. We regard it as utterly impossible, that, under any righteous moral government, the subjects of that government should either be appointed to punishment, or called actually to sustain it, but as the reward of their crimes.

“The sovereignty of God,” says Dr. Russel, “should never be confounded with his supremacy. The former is the right he possesses to bestow good of any kind, in any degree, and in whatever manner he pleases, not only where there is no claim, but where there is the greatest demerit. It is as absurd, then, to speak of sovereign justice, as of equitable mercy. The sum of the whole is, that when men suffer, they do so because they have sinned, and therefore deserve punishment; and when they are saved and blessed, they are so of free and sovereign favour.” (Letters, vol. ii., p. 275.)

The sovereignty of God is not, then, the arbitrary inflictor of evil, for “sovereignty never pains, never punishes at all.” It is, on the contrary, the bestower of good, to which the recipient has no claim. It is the blessed source from which the universe, together with all the life and happiness with which it abounds, has proceeded. It alleviates the evils which guilt must otherwise have superinduced, and secures to the transgressor a measure of good which the hand of equity could not have imparted; for though the establishment of a moral system lays a restraint, as we have seen, upon the exercise of this prerogative, it does not forbid its development when it can be manifested in harmony with the claims and safety of that government.

It is likely that these views of Divine sovereignty would have prevailed more extensively than they even do at present, but for an objection which has suggested itself to the minds of some, that, in thus restricting the application of the term

sovereignty, we use a freedom with it which the manner in which it is employed in reference to earthly rulers does not warrant. Now it is by no means certain that this would be a valid objection, even if the case were as it is represented to be. Divine and human governments are by no means so precisely alike as to render it safe, in all cases, to reason from one to the other. Justification with God is not the same thing with justification among men. Why might it not, then, be supposed that the Divine sovereignty is not exactly identical with human sovereignty? But it may be more than questioned whether the objection does not rest upon a false assumption. When the king signs the death-warrant, he acts in the capacity of judge; when he transmits a reprieve, he acts in the character of a sovereign. He pardons as a king; he cannot do it as a judge. Mere equity can only give that which is due; it cannot, consequently, bestow forgiveness upon a criminal. And when subordinate judges extend mercy to an offender, it is done as an exercise of the kingly prerogative, intrusted to them for the purpose of facilitating and expediting the proceedings of the court.

Should it be alleged that, in a case wherein certain individuals are selected as proper objects of royal clemency, while others, guilty of the same general crime, are left to suffer the sentence of the law—the act of passing over the latter is as much an act of sovereignty as the act of selecting the former; I should be disposed to reply, that it will be found very difficult to support this allegation. There is doubtless an actual determination on the part of the sovereign to exempt the former from punishment, since without such determination they must share the same fate as their companions. But what is meant by the act of passing by the latter? Does there exist in the mind of the sovereign a positive volition, an actual determination that they shall suffer? Why, what need is there for such a determination? They are condemned already, and must suffer punishment, without a determination to prevent it. In what would such a determination, were it ever formed, differ from the act of condemning a man already condemned? And in cases where it may be admitted that the

chief magistrate does actually determine that some of the criminals shall suffer, that determination rests upon their superior guilt; i. e., it has its basis in equity, not in sovereignty. A determination not resting on this ground, if such determination could be proved to exist, would surely be an instance of that necessary imperfection which must be expected to mingle itself with all human proceedings. I again, however, apprise the reader, that the parallel between the government of God, and that of man, is not perfect; and that in the following pages, the term sovereignty will be used to denote that blessed prerogative, from which all good, beyond the claim of the recipient, emanates; for "in regard to a moral system as such, and every individual moral agent, whatever is not the effect of equity, must, of course, be the effect of sovereignty, in the sense defined. For to these two principles every thing, as to the Divine conduct towards such a system, is ultimately reducible. Abstract from it equitable desert, and sovereign power, and nothing remains. This position, as it relates to the conduct of God, to Christian knowledge, and to pious affections, is of the greatest importance. But as I never heard or saw it denied, a formal proof of it appears to be needless. My full conviction is, that the negation of it, in any given instance, may be reduced to some absurd consequence." (Williams's Equity and Sovereignty, p. 126.)

After these general remarks, illustrative of the nature of sovereignty, it will be expedient to exhibit some of the manifestations of Divine sovereignty in reference to rational and accountable beings, for to them, for obvious reasons, our remarks will be confined.

It will prove, it is imagined, an important guide to just conceptions to remember that, even in a moral system, sovereignty is left free, except where it is controlled by equity. It may act in all cases except where acting is either *required* by equity, (for then equity acts,) or *contrary* to equity. It cannot, indeed, inflict the punishment upon the rebellious subject, or bestow the reward upon the perfectly obedient subject; for both are *required* by equity, and what equity

demands, that it does. It cannot, again, except in cases to be considered afterwards, rescue a transgressor from punishment, for that is *forbidden* by equity. But in all other cases God retains his right, and exercises his right, to do as he pleases—to manifest his goodness in whatever form or degree it may seem right to him; the manifestation being, however, invariably guided by the perfections of his most holy and blessed nature; and the cases are innumerable in which opportunities exist, even in a moral system, for the development of sovereignty. It may, therefore, be desirable to specify a few—and I merely profess to make a selection—for the sake of still further illustrating the principle.

First, then, there is room for sovereignty to develop itself in the bestowment of various kinds and degrees of mental qualities upon the subjects of the system. Reason, indeed, understanding by the term those faculties which distinguish men from animals, without stopping at present to specify what they are, must be conferred upon all; and, therefore, reason is not, in one aspect of the case, the gift of sovereignty. The Creator did not, indeed, owe it to man as a creature merely, for he would have done him no wrong if he had not given to him the human nature, or even not created him at all. But, determining that man should render to Him an account of his conduct, the Creator did, in this aspect of the case—in reference to his ultimate intentions and proceedings towards him—owe to him the gift of reason. Now reason is possessed by all except idiots and madmen, who cannot be regarded as accountable beings. No one supposes that the higher powers of mind—acuteness and vividness of perception, brilliance of imagination, fertility of fancy, fire of genius, intensity of feeling, &c.,—are necessary to render man a responsible agent. No doubt they connect with them higher degrees of responsibility, for “where much is given, much will be required;” but they are not essential to responsibility itself. All men, with the exceptions just referred to, possess that kind and degree of mind which will render it just in God to call them to an account; and, therefore, all must appear at length at his tribunal. Now, as all men, even had they possessed the lowest

grade of mind only, would have been responsible beings, there was room for sovereignty to develop itself, and it has done so, in the communication of mental faculties varied in an incredible degree, both as to kind and power. The mind of one man is marked by infantile weakness, of another by a giant's strength. Nothing can elevate the former; nothing permanently depress and overpower the latter. His intellect is comprehensive, searching, profound. Scarcely any subjects elude his notice; few defy his efforts to unravel and explain them. In the case of certain persons, the reasoning powers preponderate; in that of others, the imaginative. This man has little judgment, but an exuberant fancy. Another has received the gift of a piercing intellect, but if it be clear as a frosty night, it is also as cold. A third is all impetuosity and fire, but it is a fire that scorches and consumes every thing that comes in its way. We can account for these diversities by the principle of sovereignty alone. God "divideth to every man severally as he will." "He giveth none account of these matters." He has a right to "do what he will with his own."

Secondly, there is room for the development of sovereignty in the degree in which providential blessings are communicated to men. That inequalities in their external condition and circumstances exist, is manifest to all. The questions, then, which force themselves upon our attention are these: "Do these inequalities originate with God, or with man? and, if with the former, are they the results of equity, or sovereignty?" To attain satisfaction, we must contemplate some of these inequalities, recollecting, as we proceed, that the lowest degree of providential good which God has conferred upon man may be taken as a measure (a large one, no doubt) of that amount of good, of which equity requires the bestowment. God will never give to any subject of a moral system less than he deserves.

There exists, then, great inequality in the rank or station of men. One is a prince, or an emperor, another a beggar upon a dunghill. Nor in many cases can it even be conceived that the former was thus elevated on account of his mental or moral worth, and that the latter was thus depressed by his

own feebleness or worthlessness; for the throne is sometimes filled by a Nero, and the beggar's hut inhabited by one for whom the Son of God expired on the cross. The cause of the difference in this case can exist nowhere but in the Divine sovereignty. And even in other cases, where elevated rank is gained as the reward of splendid services, or signal worth, very much of sovereignty is developed. By whom were the talents necessary to the performance of such services bestowed, or the disposition which ensured their right direction and exercise? To whom must we ascribe the needed opportunity for a development of mental and moral excellence? Who cleared, for the one, the way of ascent to the very summit of the hill of distinction, while, to the other, it remained closed up with thorns and briars? Was it not God who placed Pharaoh on the throne of Egypt?—and is it possible to ascribe his elevation to any source but goodness, to the exercise of which he had no conceivable claim?

There is, further, great inequality among men, resulting from the different amount of property which they possess. While some, indeed, are wealthy, vast multitudes are indigent. And, though we admit that the accumulation of riches is sometimes the natural, and almost necessary result of forethought, penetration, prudence, and steady perseverance, yet this is not invariably the case. And even where it is so, it becomes us to recollect, that these virtues themselves, together with the opportunity for their vigorous and profitable exercise, are the gifts of Divine sovereignty. Without, however, dwelling upon this assertion, it may be asked, why is one man *born* rich and another poor? How is it to be explained, that two persons, equal in talent and moral worth, obtain such unequal measures of success?—and especially that the scale of wealth so frequently preponderates on that side where there are fewer intellectual and moral qualities to weigh it down? The facts are clearly to be resolved into Divine sovereignty. God is here exercising his right of bestowing the bounties of his providence upon men as it seems good in his sight.

There is, finally, great inequality amongst men in regard to the measure of bodily sufferings they are called to endure. One man can scarcely recollect the period when his rest and

quiet were not broken in upon by the irruption of disease and pain; another cannot remember the day when he suffered a single attack from either! Now, if we had found it necessary to admit that man is the maker of his own fortune, all must allow that health is the exclusive gift of God. To what source is it, then, to be ascribed? To equity, or sovereignty? Have transgressors any right to immunity from disease and suffering? Why, what claim upon God have they for any thing but suffering? It is impossible to account for the fact, that of two individuals, equal in point of moral worth, one is the constant subject of bodily infirmity, and the other the habitual possessor of health, but by admitting that the hand of sovereignty confers upon the latter a measure of good to which he has no claim.

Thirdly, there is room for a development of sovereignty in the degree in which religious privileges are conferred upon men. Great disparity, in this point of view, is to be seen in the external condition of nations. The Jews were formerly the depositaries of Divine revelation. "To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants," &c. Their fertile and peaceful valleys were illumined by the rising beam of Divine truth, while "darkness covered the whole earth besides, and gross darkness the people." Nor, were they thus distinguished because they were better than other nations. If we believe the records of inspired truth, it was solely because the Lord loved them. The peculiar privileges they enjoyed were the gifts of sovereignty; and the language of acknowledgment on their part should have been, "It is even so, Father, because so it seemeth good in thy sight." And to what ultimate cause is it to be ascribed that some nations in the present day enjoy the revelation of Divine mercy, while others remain in the darkness of heathenism? Is it possible to assign any reason for this fact except that God, who may dispense his gifts as it pleases him, has so operated upon the hearts of his people, and so arranged the proceedings of his providence, as to make way for its introduction into one quarter, while he has permitted the barriers against its progress in another to remain?

There is, also, a very remarkable difference in the situation

of individuals, as well as of nations, in this point of view. Some have experienced the high privilege of a godly parentage, and of early religious instruction; while others, at an early period of life, were initiated into the mysteries of iniquity. Many there are who find ready access to the means of grace, and can avail themselves of an able, and faithful, and searching gospel ministry; while not a few are either excluded altogether, by the infelicity of their circumstances, from the ordinances of Divine worship, or have access to no ministry, save that which has never yet been the means of converting a single sinner from the error of his ways. How is this great disparity to be accounted for? It will not be denied that the hand of Divine Providence is to be traced in it. We are constrained, therefore, to think that that hand is guided in all its operations and allotments by the principle of sovereignty.

The grand and paramount display of Divine sovereignty, in reference to individuals, is, however, the exertion of that holy influence upon the minds of the chosen to salvation, by which they are brought to the knowledge and belief of the gospel;—together with the Divine purpose to exert this influence, of which it is at once the index and the accomplishment. It would seem, accordingly, to be necessary to enter here upon an examination of the doctrine of effectual calling, as well as of eternal and personal election. Many considerations, however, induce me to confine my attention to the latter, and merely to aim at illustrating and establishing the former, as far as its elucidation and proof may be required to strengthen the chain of evidence in support of the great doctrine of eternal and personal election.

In the further prosecution of this subject, it may be expedient to adopt the following order:—First, to present the reader with a scriptural statement of the doctrine itself; Secondly, to adduce the proof which may be appealed to in support of it; and, Thirdly, to reply to the objections which have been urged against it.

LECTURE II.

ELECTION.

STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE.

IN the prosecution of the proposed plan, I shall, I. endeavour to lay before the reader a scriptural statement of the doctrine of Election, as illustrative of the Divine sovereignty.

The verb elect means to select, or choose. When God is said to elect an individual, the simple import of the phrase is that he *chooses* that individual; the ultimate end for which he chooses him, the blessings which he selects him to enjoy, are left to be gathered from the context; in reference to this point, the verb elect itself can manifestly afford us no aid.

The abstract term election denotes accordingly, either the act of electing, which may be regarded as its primary and proper meaning; or the person or persons elected, which is obviously a derivative and less proper signification. Without meaning to deny that the term election is sometimes used by the New Testament writers in the secondary or derivative sense, (though it may be well to observe that, even in the cases in which it is thus used, it necessarily implies the primary sense, as a performance implies an act of performing, —a production, an act of producing,) the reader is requested to bear in mind, that the word election will be used, in the subsequent pages, to denote the act of choice on the part of God, and not the being or beings chosen. I have been more especially induced thus to fix the sense of the term election, previously to any attempt to explain the doctrine of eternal and personal election, by the extremely vague and unsatisfactory manner in which the word is dealt with by one of the most modern and able defenders of Arminianism in this country, the Rev. Richard Watson, in his “Theological In-

stitutes." He fixes upon three senses of the word election which, as he conceives, are contained in the Scriptures; "first, the election of individuals to perform some special service; second, the election of nations, or bodies of people, to eminent religious privileges; and, thirdly, the election of individuals to be the children of God, and the heirs of eternal life." Now it is especially to be observed, that the term election, in each of the above instances, is used, and can only be used, in what I have ventured to call its primary sense. Election does not mean either the persons elected, or the blessings to the enjoyment of which they are elected, but God's act of electing or choosing them; and I have not the slightest doubt that such was the meaning which Mr. Watson, in writing these sentences, intended to convey. And yet, in the subsequent discussion, he inadvertently departs from this sense of the term—now using it to denote the persons elected, and then, again, the blessings which they are chosen to enjoy—and wandering so strangely from one sense of the term to another, that he involves the whole subject in perplexity. "The nation of the Jews were," he says, "deprived of *election*; the ELECTION was offered to them first." Now what can be the meaning of the term election here? What *was* offered to the Jews? Surely a blessing, or a privilege;—not an act of God. They were invited to enter into the Christian church. The privilege of sonship was offered to them. Had they complied with the invitation, that compliance would have proved that God had elected them to be his sons; but he did not, and could not offer to them *the act of choosing them* to the enjoyment of that distinguished privilege. I do not wonder at this departure from the primary sense of the term election. It is the tendency of Arminianism to fix attention more upon what man does when a sinner is converted to God, than upon what God does in his conversion. If the latter be brought prominently into view, then, as God's acts are inseparably connected with his decrees, (his purposes being his actions in intention, and his actions his purposes in accomplishment,) the conclusions of Calvinism can scarcely be avoided. As an instance of this tendency, I may refer to the Arminian

mode of explaining the language of the apostle, "called according to his purpose." "The term called," we are told, "sometimes means *invited*; at other times it means compliance with the invitation;" and this, it is said, is the sense of called here. I answer, that nothing can be a more obvious mistake. The words point out not the compliance of man, but that gracious influence of the Holy Spirit by which the compliance is secured.

By the term election, then, we mean an act of choice on the part of God. When the term is used in its most important application, in the sense which it bears in the creed of those who maintain the doctrine of eternal and personal election, (which doctrine we now proceed to unfold and establish,) it denotes, according to the statement usually given of the doctrine, God's act of choosing some members of the human family to enjoy eternal life through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;—the first member of the sentence exhibiting the end, and the concluding member the means, through which this end is attained. It may be wished, perhaps, that a statement of the doctrine, more entirely accordant with the facts of the case, had been substituted in lieu of this: for, in strict accuracy, it cannot be said that God directly decrees that any man shall believe the gospel, and persevere unto the end, and inherit eternal life; but that he determines to visit him with that special influence of the Holy Spirit which will certainly secure these delightful results. It is important to observe that the decrees of God are exactly co-extensive with the actions of God. They reach as far as the latter, but they do not go beyond them. "God does what he decrees, and decrees what he does." Now God does not repent, and believe, and love, and obey; he does not accordingly decree that repentance, and faith, and love, should exist. It is man that gives credit to the Divine record—that perseveres unto the end. That which God does, in the whole of this business, is the exertion of that special grace which leads men so to act as to secure their salvation. And this it is that God decrees to do. Election is, then, God's purpose to exert upon the minds of certain members of the human family that

special and holy influence which will secure their ultimate salvation. Yet, as he knows perfectly what will be the result of that influence, and as he employs it to secure this result, it is in harmony with scriptural phraseology to say, that the result is both decreed and effected by Him. God withdrew from Pharaoh those restraints of his providence which, while they remained, prevented the full development of his depravity; but as he foresaw the consequence of that withdrawal, and, as it was not, perhaps, too much to say that the withdrawal was designed to afford an opportunity for that development, he is declared "to have hardened the heart of Pharaoh." On the same principle, he is said to have chosen some men to salvation; i. e. he has chosen them to become, in his own time and manner, the recipients of that special and holy influence which will secure their salvation. With this explanation of the common statements of the doctrine of election, they may be allowed to stand, and there will be no necessity to disturb the usual phraseology upon the subject.

In proceeding to lay before the reader a more full account of the doctrine of election, it is deemed advisable to proceed by the method of calling his attention to the following series of remarks:—

1st, then, I would request him to notice that the object of the electing decree is to secure good—infinite good—to man, and not evil; in other words, it is the choice of some to salvation, (in the sense explained above,) and not the choice of any to damnation. It is the determination of God to impart converting grace to certain individuals; but it is not a counter determination to deny converting grace to the remainder; far less a determination, formed without any reference to their state and character, that they shall ultimately perish. In short, the electing decree includes none but those who will appear ultimately around "the throne of God and the Lamb." There is no reprobating decree; none at least which can be regarded as the proper opposite of the electing decree.* I

* I must not be understood here to deny that, since God foresees who will finally reject the gospel, and since he will condemn them hereafter for rejecting it, there must have existed in his mind, from eternity, a determination to per-

found my confidence in the correctness of these important assertions upon the fact, that predestination is, by the sacred writers, uniformly represented as being connected with glorification, and not with condemnation. The elect are said to be "chosen to salvation." There is no election, properly so called, of any to damnation. "Moreover," says the apostle, "whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

It is true, indeed, that Arminians are in the habit of affirming that the doctrine of Election cannot be consistently held, without connecting with it the doctrine of Reprobation; since a decree to save some, as they allege, necessarily implies a decree to punish, or not to save others. Mr. Watson, for instance, assures us, that "election involves necessarily the doctrine of the absolute and unconditional reprobation of all the rest of mankind." (Vol. iii., p. 68.)

Calvin, also, in the earlier part of his life at least, held that election and reprobation are inseparably connected with one another; and many, it is admitted in the present day, who adopt generally that scheme of doctrine which is distinguished by his name, seem unable to conceive that an actual and unconditional decree to save some, can be separated from a counter actual and unconditional decree to condemn or not to save others. I am myself fully convinced that the two things are by no means inseparable—that they do not even seem necessarily to involve each other. I think so for the following reasons amongst others:—

First, the proper opposite of a decree to save some of the human race only—or rather, that which such a decree necessarily involves, and without which it cannot possibly exist—is merely the absence or non-existence of a decree to save the rest. This I believe to be the fact of the case. There is a decree to save some members of the human family, and there

form this specific act of condemnation equally with all other acts. But this determination, resting on foreseen impenitence, is not the proper opposite of the electing decree, which is unconditional, and, therefore, must not be regarded as that reprobating decree which is said to be inseparable from predestination.

is no decree to save the remaining members of that family. Any real difficulty in which this statement of the facts of the case may involve us, if there should be any, we must, of course, meet and grapple with as we best can; for a decree, comprehending certain individuals *only*, cannot, of course, include the others. If God decreed that the present universe *only* should have existence, he did not and could not decree that another should spring into being. If he decreed that man alone, of all the creatures in this world, should possess rationality, he did not, of course, decree that the beast should be a rational being.

But it is objected, that the absence of a decree to save the non-elect does not constitute all that is necessarily implied in a decree to save the elect—that, in addition to this, it must comprehend an actual positive decree *not to save them*. I observe, therefore,

Secondly, That this position—or, that a decree to save some, implies of necessity an actual decree not to save others—cannot be maintained without the admission of a general principle, the practical acknowledgment of which would lead to interminable difficulty, and to great absurdity. God saves men, as we have seen, by exerting upon their minds that special and holy influence which infallibly secures their salvation. This is what he does; this is what he decrees to do. Now there is no principle on which it can be safely asserted, that God cannot determine to exert this influence upon the minds of some, without positively determining not to exert a similar influence on the minds of the rest, but this, viz. that whenever he determines to impart a certain blessing to one of his creatures, he must positively determine not to bestow the same blessing upon others; or, to generalize the principle yet more completely, that, when he actually determines to perform that one act, out of thousands or millions of others, all of which are equally possible to him, which he ultimately *does* perform, he at the same time positively determines not to perform the millions of others he *does not* ultimately perform. The falsehood and absurdity of the principle, when thus generalized, becomes perfectly apparent. In reference to man, there must

be an actual determination on the part of God to do that which he does ; there may also, perhaps, be a positive determination not to do that which he does not do ; but this is not necessarily the case. In reference to the vast multitude even of contemplated actions, which are not ultimately performed by us, there is no positive volition at all in the mind ; all that can be said is, that they awaken no determination to perform them, and so are not performed. I may determine to relieve one out of twenty destitute families in my neighbourhood, without positively determining not to relieve the others ; and, if any one should ask me why others are not relieved, it would be sufficient to reply, that the giving of actual relief can only spring from a determination to relieve, which, in reference to them, does not exist. I may determine to take one book from the shelf, without a positive determination not to take the others. There may, indeed, be such a determination, but it is not necessarily implied in the determination to take ; and that is all I am obliged to prove ; the other books may not even be thought of.

This reasoning applies with yet greater force to the Great Eternal. There must exist in the mind of God a determination to do what he actually does, because his actions are the result of his volitions, or determinations. But where God does not act—where he does nothing, he determines nothing. It is childish to suppose that, because when he acts, there must be a determination to act, when he does not act, there must be a determination not to act ; since a determination is necessary to a state of action, but it surely is not necessary to a state of rest. When Jehovah created the present universe, is it necessary to suppose that there existed in his mind a positive determination not to create any of the other possible universes which were present to his view ? Surely not. He created the present universe ; there must, therefore, have been a determination to create it. He did not create the others ; and all that can be said is, there was no determination to create them. When he communicated vegetable and animal life to the plant, and to the beast, what did that communication imply concerning his determination ? Clearly

nothing more than that he resolved to do what he has done. No one can safely affirm, that he positively determined not to give to either of them rationality. The simple fact of the case is, that he did not determine to bestow the latter blessing, and consequently *did* not impart it. The determination to give vegetable and animal life, was necessary to the existence of the plant and the animal; but a determination that neither should be rational beings, was not necessary to prevent either from becoming such: there is, accordingly, no reason whatever to suppose that such a determination existed. When God determined to save man, did that volition necessarily imply a positive determination not to save the angels who kept not their first estate? No one, it is presumed, will answer in the affirmative. It implied, indeed, that fallen angels were not included in the merciful purpose of God—that there was no volition to save them; but no degree of ingenuity can gather any conclusion beyond this, from the facts of the case. Why then should a positive determination, on the part of God, to save some of the human family, be supposed to imply of necessity a counter and positive determination not to save the other members of the family? Not to save men, is not to act—it is just doing nothing. Now what reasonable pretence is there for affirming that—since when God acts, he must determine to act—when he does not act, he determines not to act? In confirmation of the preceding remarks, I beg the reader's particular attention to the following statement, by the late Dr. E. Williams, which points out very happily the source of the fallacy, in which many perspicacious minds are entangled upon this subject.

“That election and reprobation are inseparably connected, takes for granted what can never be proved, that non-election implies a decree. Non-election is a negative term, not electing; but to decree a negation is as absurd as to decree nothing, or to decree not to decree. The notion of decreeing to permit, involves the same absurdity; for to permit, in this connexion, is not to hinder; but to decree not to hinder, is the same as to decree nothing: or, as before, to decree not to decree. The fallacy consists in the supposition, that non-

election is a positive term, and therefore requires a positive determination by way of decree. The truth of the case is, that, on supposition of one million being elected to holiness as the means, and happiness as the end, the other million is not elected to holiness and happiness. These two things are as opposite as doing and not doing; but to suppose an infinitely perfect Being to decree what he does not do, is incompatible; for it supposes him to decree to do, what he decrees not to do. It is, indeed, perfectly scriptural and rational to say that whatever is done by an infinitely wise Being, is done according to design, an unvarying purpose, which is properly called a decree; but what meaning can there be in his decreeing to do the contrast to his doing?

“The same reasoning is applicable to preterition. The mind, without due attention to caution, is apt to be deceived by the feeling which attaches a positive idea to the term, or the thing intended by it. We are disposed by common associations to conclude that, as to pass by is an *act* of a person, so the object passed by requires a designed determination for that purpose. But this is a fallacious conclusion. When a shepherd, for instance, passes by a number of sheep, and fixes upon one, a voluntary act of choosing that one, does not imply another voluntary act to pass by others. He knows all alike, and his wisdom selects the object of his choice, and this object he actually chooses, the others he passes by; but what is thus expressed by a positive term, implies nothing positive with respect to the objects.” And thus he proceeds to show it is with respect to God. He determines to save some, in the sense already explained; but that determination by no means involves a counter determination in regard to others. There exists in the Divine mind the determination to save, and nothing else.

If it were necessary to pursue this subject further, an additional illustration might be gathered from the conduct of God. It is said, by the objector, that there cannot be a decree on the part of God to save some, without a counter decree not to save the rest. Then why should not, I ask, the *act* of saving some, necessarily involve the opposite *act* of des-

troubling the rest? Why should two opposite decrees more certainly and necessarily involve one another, than two opposite acts? Now an Arminian admits that God saves those who are saved, while he denies that he destroys those who are lost. Any effort, then, which he may successfully make to show that the former does not include the latter, is just an answer to his own objection. But,

Thirdly, I oppose the opinion, that there exists in the mind of God a positive determination not to save the non-elect, on the ground that such a determination would be altogether unnecessary, and therefore does not exist. God does nothing in vain—decrees nothing in vain. Why suppose, then, the existence of a decree not to save certain members of the human family, when every member of that family must finally perish, without a decree to prevent his destruction? Where would be the use of such a decree? It would be like a special decree to permit the fire to burn, or the water to drown us, when exposed to the unrestrained action of either of these elements. Would such a decree be compatible with infinite wisdom? The full influence and tendency of this statement will become more apparent when the reader has considered the next general observation, explanatory of the doctrine of election.

2ndly, then, I observe that God's act of choosing some of the human race to salvation—or the electing decree—pre-supposes the fallen state of the whole race. Since Jehovah is an immutable Being, all his views and determinations must be eternal like himself. One decree cannot therefore be previous, in the order of time, to another decree; yet in the order of nature, as we call it, it may be, and indeed must be so. At all events, it is impossible for us to conceive of the Divine actions and decrees, but as related to, and dependent upon, one another. Thus, for instance, we cannot imagine a purpose to punish man arising in the Divine mind, except as subsequent, in the order of nature, to his contemplation of the sin of man; and, indeed, as the result of it. It is thus with a purpose to save man. Such a purpose necessarily implies that man needed salvation. It could not then have

arisen, in the order of nature, previously to Jehovah's conception of man as a guilty and depraved being. I am not ignorant that the contrary of this has been affirmed. Supralapsarianism, for instance, teaches that the electing decree was passed without any reference to the fall ;—that the human race were not contemplated by it as transgressors ;—that not only were some members of that race appointed by it to endure everlasting torments, as well as others to enjoy eternal felicity, but that the appointment, in the case of the former as well as of the latter, was made without regard to character and desert ;—that, in short, God determined to glorify his justice in the condemnation of some, as well as his mercy in the salvation of others ; and, to effect this purpose, decreed the fall and ruin of the whole race.

Now it becomes every writer to speak of any sentiment on which he has occasion to treat, let it have been held by Calvin or Arminius, or any one else, just as he thinks of it. I feel myself accordingly constrained to add, that I know no term, either in any living or dead language, sufficiently strong to express my abhorrence of this doctrine. That it has never been held, and that it cannot be held, by a Christian, I should, indeed, be backward to affirm ; but that it is deeply injurious in its tendency, as well as that it evinces a state of profound ignorance of the first principles of moral science, and great regardlessness of the word of God, I can have no doubt. How can any one contrive to persuade himself that a decree, emanating from a moral governor, (and such is God,) and appointing a considerable number of the subjects of his government to misery—eternal misery, which is not founded on their transgression, can be compatible with justice ? Why what is justice ? Is it not rendering to every individual that which is his due—what he deserves ? And how can any one but a transgressor deserve punishment ? How then can any one who is not contemplated in the light of a transgressor—who is viewed merely as a creature—be destined to punishment ? Besides, this notion of the Supralapsarians, incompatible as we have thus seen with equity, is inconsistent, and grossly absurd. If suffering were to be inflicted upon an innocent subject of

moral government—or, what is the same thing, upon one who was regarded as innocent—it would not be punishment to him. Punishment is not mere misery, but misery which is the result of transgression. Condemnation is a legal act—the act of the judge applying the general threatenings of the law to the case of the particular individual before him. An innocent man may, indeed, be unjustly condemned, i. e. he may be falsely assumed to be guilty; but, if he be held to be innocent, he cannot be condemned at all. No judge would dare to condemn him, or rather *could* condemn him. An order to imprison or hang him, would be brutal and bloody violence, but it could not be condemnation; since this latter is the formal declaration of the court, of the amount of suffering to which an individual has exposed himself by his transgression; or, which is the same thing to the argument, his assumed transgression; whereas, by supposition, he is held by the court to be innocent. And yet Supralapsarianism talks of God's decreeing certain individuals to *condemnation* and *punishment*, who are, at the very moment, held to be innocent. Never was there a notion more self-evidently absurd than this. It is something like imagining a man continuing a man, when bereft of reason; and a brute continuing a brute, when endowed with it.

Sublapsarianism affirms, that the reprobating decree (for it holds a reprobating decree distinct from the general law of the Divine government, that "the soul that sinneth shall die") is founded on foreseen transgression; and that it thus declares practically what is the due reward of transgression. There is, accordingly, the broadest and strongest possible line of demarcation between the two systems; and it is to me a subject of deep regret, that a man so justly eminent as the late Dr. Dick, should speak as if the difference were slight and immaterial. There may be difficulties, and there certainly are difficulties, when we proceed to inquire into the manner in which the whole race sank into condemnation; but they belong to another subject, and should not be considered in connexion with this. The radical difference between the two systems—a difference which should never be lost sight of, is

this; viz. that the one system decrees guilty, and the other innocent, beings to punishment.

The electing decree then pre-supposes the fallen state of man. I argue this on two grounds.

First, on the ground of what that decree is in itself. We have seen that election, accurately speaking, is not the choice of any of the human race to salvation; but God's purpose or determination to visit the elect with that special and holy influence of his Spirit which, by certainly leading them to understand and believe and obey the gospel, secures their salvation. Now an influence which brings its subjects to the knowledge and faith of Divine truth, must of course find them unenlightened, and impenitent, i.e., in other words, fallen creatures; and, consequently, a decree to visit them with this influence must contemplate them in this point of view. I must not, however, forget that a certain class of theologians attempt to evade the force of this argument by affirming, that the preceding statements misstate the final end of election,—that the special influence of the Spirit, to which we have just referred, is exerted not to recover, but to confirm; not to rescue from ignorance, and guilt, and depravity, but to prevent a lapse into these evils. The elect, they tell us, never fell under condemnation; the object of the Saviour's interposition being to preserve them from this mighty mischief. I take, therefore, the next ground, and argue,

Secondly, that the electing decree contemplated men as fallen and condemned, is evident from the current phraseology of Scripture upon this subject. If the persons comprehended in that decree had been regarded as sinless, they must of course have been predestinated to remain in a state of integrity; and then the current phraseology of Divine revelation must also have been, not that the elect were appointed to be rescued from sin, and guilt, and misery, but to be preserved from falling into these evils. Such, however, is not the current phraseology of Scripture. "For whom he did foreknow," says the apostle, "he also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of his Son.*" Now is this language which the apostle would have thought of using—which the Spirit of God

would have prompted him to use—if, when the electing decree was passed, they had been contemplated as actually conformed to it? In that case, must not Paul have said, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate that, being conformed to the image of his Son,” they *might remain so*? It is scarcely possible to conceive of any thing more self-evident than this. Still more conclusive, however, is the language he employs in his Epistle to the Ephesians: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we *should be holy*, and without blame before him in love.” Who can doubt, on reading these words, that the choice must have contemplated them as unholy? To the same effect, also, is the declaration that “God hath from the beginning chosen his people *to salvation*.” The choice must then have regarded them as destitute of salvation; as being in fact the children of wrath, even as others.

3dly, The next general remark upon the great subject of election is, that the cause of the Divine purpose to save some of the fallen race is not to be found in the elect themselves.

They were not chosen to salvation on account of their foreseen repentance, and faith, and obedience; for faith and repentance, as we have seen, (and as I shall hereafter show more at large,) are the fruit, and not the root of predestination. We are “chosen in Christ,” not because we *were* holy, or because we were contemplated as holy, but that *we might become* holy. “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

Nor were they selected from the mass of mankind, and chosen to become the recipients of special and saving influence, because their sins were less numerous and aggravated than those of others. Had this been the case, salvation would at least have appeared to be of works; whereas the apostle declares, that “God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus,

before the world began :” and, further, that “ it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy :” or, in other words, that the mercy of God, towards those who are ultimately brought to share in it, is uncaused by any thing in them. *Further*, to suppose that the elect were appointed to salvation because their amount of guilt was less than that of others, would lay for them a ground of boasting, in opposition to the revealed design of God in communicating the gospel to the world, viz. to bring down the lofty looks of man. *Finally*, the sentiment opposed is at variance with the facts of the case. I am well aware what extreme difficulty is involved in pronouncing a judgment upon the comparative amount of guilt with which different individuals are chargeable ; yet it would be worse than absurd to deny that sometimes, yea, frequently, individuals are made the subjects of Divine grace, who had sunk to a lower degree in the scale of moral worthlessness and degradation, than others : and, by rendering them the monuments of his compassion, Jehovah shows that he “ has mercy on whom he will have mercy.” Paul felt and declared that he was the chief of sinners, yet he obtained pardon ; and his language is very memorable, “ Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” (1 Tim. i. 16.) It is especially in this aspect that the doctrine of election so strikingly displays and magnifies the Divine sovereignty. It affords an example of the communication of good to man—the highest good—spiritual good—eternal good, which was not attracted towards him by a manifestation on his part of moral excellence, nor even by a less full and obnoxious development of moral degradation ; and which, therefore, can only have flowed from the fountain of Jehovah’s infinite compassion. “ Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! ” “ Who hath given to him ? and it shall be recompensed unto him again. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen.”

4th, The last general remark, explanatory of the doctrine of Election, is the following, viz., that we must be careful not to imagine that no cause exists for the sovereign favour conferred upon the vessels of mercy, because that cause is not to be found in them. To maintain the latter—or that the purpose of God is uncaused by any thing in the saved themselves—is necessary to secure to Divine sovereignty the honour of man's salvation. To suppose the former, is to charge capriciousness and folly upon the Great Eternal. “It is one thing for there to be no reason *in the creature* for the purpose of mercy concerning him; it is another thing for there to be no *reason at all*.” “It is one thing,” says Dr. Burder, “to *have* a reason, and another, and a very different thing, to *assign* a reason.” The latter God has not seen fit to do; yet, though he has drawn a veil of impenetrable mystery over them, he *has* reasons for his conduct. Our opponents, for the sake of gaining an advantage, may represent our views of election as charging capriciousness upon God. We maintain that there is, and can be, no capriciousness; but merely the absence of revelation. And the absence of revelation on this point, being in harmony with the Divine conduct in relation to other matters, is what might have been expected. How can we imagine that the great God would unfold the reasons of his proceedings to men, except where the disclosure might prove essential to their welfare? And how do we know that a revelation of the reasons which led him to choose some men to life, and not others, would be of any benefit to us? Had he taken us into his councils in reference to other things, we should have been more entitled to expect a similar communication on this point. But has he done it? Why did he select the present universe, and not create others? Has he told us? Why did he give rationality to man, and not confer it upon the beast? Has he given us “any account of these matters?” Why did he choose some to life? The question is, doubtless, unanswerable, but not more so than ten thousand others. Where God does not please to give us light, we may be assured that it is best for us to remain in dark-

ness. Let us learn to exercise that confidence in his wisdom and goodness, in this the highest exercise of his sovereignty, to which all those parts of his conduct which he has been pleased to explain have clearly entitled him; and sit down contented with the assurance, that the Judge of all the earth will do that which is right.

LECTURE III.

ELECTION.

PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE.

II. WE advance now to the second main division of this great subject, in which we are to state the evidence to which we appeal in support of the doctrine of eternal and personal election. Is there any foundation in reason, or in Scripture, to sustain the confidence we cherish, that all who shall appear at length around the throne of God, in the heavenly temple, were destined, in the eternal purpose of God, to occupy that exalted station? or—according to that more precise view which we have given of the doctrine—were chosen to be the recipients of that special and saving influence of the Holy Spirit which secures their admission into this temple? Our reply is, that both reason and revelation supply a solid basis for our confidence. I proceed, therefore,

First, to adduce the testimony of reason in reference to this point. And here I cannot but think that the answer which reason gives to the question just stated, must depend upon the reply which is truly given to another, viz., “Is God the cause or author of man’s salvation, or is man the author of his own salvation?” If the latter should be found to be the case, it would be needless to inquire concerning the Divine purpose in reference to human salvation. What God does not do, he does not decree to do. On the supposition that man extricates himself from the blindness and depravity of his natural state, the purpose of God—if there *were* any purpose of God in reference to his deliverance—could only be a decree to permit him to work out his own salvation.

Now to suppose the existence of any such decree is little less than absurd. Can a being of boundless benevolence be supposed to be so inveterate an enemy to the ultimate and eternal happiness of his creatures that he must bind himself by decree not to throw any obstacle in the way of its attainment? Most manifestly not. If Jehovah be not the efficient cause of man's salvation, we may rest assured that that event is not the subject of decree. But if he be, the case is essentially different. I may be permitted to take for granted the fact, that he is the cause of human salvation, since it is at least professedly admitted by those with whom the present controversy is carried on. Assuming then that this is the case—that it is by special Divine agency that a sinner is brought to believe in Christ, the proof that this event is the subject of a previous purpose, or decree, is based upon the moral axiom, that every wise being acts upon a plan previously digested and arranged. I call this a moral axiom, for, in point of fact, to act thus is the great point of distinction between wisdom and folly. The latter exercises no forethought. Its conduct is left to the direction of accident, or caprice. Wisdom, on the contrary, looks all around, and before her; considers what is right and best to be done, in all the contemplated possible variety of circumstances in which she may be placed; and acts in harmony with a previous plan, or determination, formed on a cool, and cautious, and full investigation of all the facts of the case. It is true, indeed, in reference to man, that much must be left to the decision of the moment, because circumstances may arise which no human sagacity can foresee. But, in all cases where it is possible for a wise man to look before him, he never takes a step of importance without doing so. Can we suppose the fact to be otherwise in the case of the perfection of wisdom?—that Jehovah put his hand originally to the formation of the material universe, or that he put it subsequently to the more illustrious work of the new creation, without any previous thought (to speak after the manner of men) upon the subject—without previously determining to act as he ultimately did act? Is it to be conceived for a moment, that the creation of

a moral system, pre-eminently developing his character, and the transformation of a vast multitude of immortal beings into his holy image, exhibiting the power and plenitude of his grace, was the work of accident? Let those believe it who will, or can. I frankly say that I cannot. Whatever difficulties attend the admission of the, in many respects, inscrutable doctrine of election, (and no one who has thought maturely upon the subject will venture to deny that there are difficulties,) I am constrained to think that others of far more alarming magnitude follow its rejection. Erasing the doctrine from our creed, we may possibly escape Scylla, but the question is, do we not fall into Charybdis?

Further, on the same assumption, the basis of our present reasoning, viz. that God is the efficient agent in the salvation of man, the doctrine of election follows as a necessary consequence of the Divine foreknowledge. Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world, yea, from eternity. Since there is no distinction of time, as past, present, and future, with God, this must be the case. If then God saves the elect, in the sense formerly explained, the work performed by him in effecting their salvation must, like all his other works, have been foreseen from eternity. In other words, he must have foreseen the exertion of that special influence which secures their salvation. But how could he foresee the exertion of this influence unless he had determined to employ it? What foundation of pre-knowledge could there be but pre-appointment? The case might have been otherwise if the salvation of man were effected by himself, or by any one else. Then I am ready to acknowledge foreknowledge, on the part of God, might exist without decree; as he might foresee that exertion of power—whether their own, or of some one else—which saved them. But, since God actually saves the elect, the certain operation of his saving power upon them is the only ground of his certain knowledge of their salvation. Now there is nothing but his own determination to exert that power, to render its operation certain. Election is thus the ground of certainty and foreknowledge; and, on our present assumption, the only ground.

Secondly, we proceed to adduce the testimony of Scripture in support of the doctrine of election.

To elect, is to determine that certain persons shall be brought to the enjoyment of certain blessings; and it must be carefully distinguished from the putting of them into actual possession of the blessings. Thus, the actual separation of the Israelites from the Gentile world, that they might become the depositaries of Divine revelation, was not God's election of them. His previous purpose to introduce them into that special and honourable relation to himself was their election; of which purpose their separation from other nations was the accomplishment. The actual introduction into the Christian church of those Jews and Gentiles who received the gospel was not their election. They constituted the remnant, *according to the election of grace*; but the state of high privilege to which they were admitted by God, necessarily implied a previous determination to admit them to its enjoyment. That determination was their election. Were it admitted, for the sake of argument, that this determination was a conditional one, or founded on their foreseen faith, I should still maintain that their election was the purpose of God to admit them to the enjoyment of this privilege, and was not their actual entrance upon the possession of it.

I am more especially induced to offer these explanatory remarks, because, in the work of the Rev. R. Watson, there is obviously, in my apprehension at least, a want of due discrimination between the purpose of God, and the accomplishment of that purpose; or, rather, a total confounding of the one with the other. Election, according to his statements, is the actual separation of the people of God from the men of the world; it is, in fact, their calling and sanctification. "To be elected is," he says, "to be separated from the world, and to be sanctified by the Spirit and by the blood of Christ." (Vol. iii. p. 64.) I answer, that this is incorrect. Calling and sanctification are the results of election, but it is a great mistake to identify them with it. They are God's choice visibly and practically developed, but they are not the choice itself. To prove that I am not wrong in the charge I now bring

against Mr. Watson, of having, either from heedlessness, or with the insidious intention of throwing a degree of obscurity over the subject which may render it more difficult for an opponent to grapple with him, identified election with effectual calling, and sanctification, I quote the following paragraph: "Actual election cannot be eternal; for, from eternity, the elect were not actually chosen out of the world, and from eternity they could not be sanctified unto obedience:" (i. e. as he must mean, they were not actually separated from the world by a change of views, feelings, hopes, desires, &c., and were not actually sanctified; because there is nothing to forbid the supposition that they were chosen from eternity to be thus actually separated and sanctified in time.) He adds, "The phrases, eternal election, and eternal decree of election, so often in the lips of Calvinists, can, in common sense, therefore, mean only *an eternal purpose to elect*; or a purpose formed in *eternity* to elect, or choose out of the world, and sanctify in *time*, by the Spirit and blood of Jesus." (Vol. iii. pp. 64-5.) I reply, that this eternal purpose to sanctify is election. Mr. Watson could never have charged our principles with maintaining the absurdity that eternal election is an eternal *purpose* to elect, unless he had identified election with sanctification, i. e. confounded the cause with the effect. Besides, it became Mr. Watson to prove that there is not an eternal *purpose* to sanctify those who are actually sanctified in time. If God gives the new heart, and the right spirit, i. e. if he sanctifies, then he must have designed to sanctify; which is, in fact, our election. I hold it to be a moral axiom, that "God does what he decrees, and decrees what he does." The Arminian is impaled on the horns of the dilemma, from which no power in the universe can extricate him; "Either God does not sanctify man,—or, if he does, he does it as the result of a decree to sanctify."

Election is not then the actual bestowment of certain blessings upon men, but it is the design or purpose of God to bring them to their enjoyment. The blessings are actually enjoyed in time—the purpose to bestow them may have existed, and we think must have existed, from eternity. Now

that the Scriptures do speak of a Divine purpose to communicate blessings of some description unto men, and of a remnant—a remnant according to the election of grace, who will of course ultimately enjoy them—will, I suppose, be admitted by all. Were it possible for any doubt to exist on this point, the following passages, as well as others, must put it to flight. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world.” (Ephes. i. 3, 4.) If words have any meaning, it is affirmed, in this passage, that the saints at Ephesus enjoyed the spiritual blessings (it is of no consequence to our present argument what was their nature) to which the apostle alludes, in consequence of, and in conformity with, a previous choice, or purpose, or determination of God, that they should be thus highly distinguished. Again, writing to the church at Thessalonica, he says, “Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God ;” and, in a second letter addressed to the same body, he adds, “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.” Peter also, adopting the strain of his beloved brother Paul, denominates the strangers of the dispersion, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” &c. The whole of these statements, it will be observed, are in entire harmony with the words of Christ, who prayed not for the world, but those whom his Father had given him out of the world.

It is thus placed beyond all reasonable doubt that there was, in the Divine mind, a purpose to bestow certain blessings upon certain individuals. Now it will be found that there is only one question, or at most two, which can be raised in reference to this purpose. There can be no question in regard to its *date*, for that is, and must be, eternal ; all the decrees of God are so. How can it be otherwise if he be immutable? Nor can there be any question in regard to the *persons contemplated in this purpose* ; for they must be particular individuals. “The personality of election,” as it has been justly

said, "arises out of its very nature." Pelagians, indeed, to whom the notion of personal election is offensive, are in the habit of telling us that the subjects of this purpose are bodies of men, or nations. But are not nations composed of individuals? What is a nation but a collection of persons, as a mountain is a collection of particles? The mountain is not distinct from the atoms that compose it, the nation is not distinct from the individuals who constitute it. In fact, the nation is nothing in itself: it is a mere abstraction of the mind; not a thing, but a general term invented by us to designate the living and rational beings (who only have real existence) that are to be found within certain geographical boundaries,—as an animal is not a thing, but a general term. To attempt to overthrow the doctrine, that God's election is the choice of *individuals*, by representing it as a purpose to confer blessings upon *nations*, is an error of precisely the same character with that of those who represent Jehovah as having established general laws, in his providential government, without foreseeing the reach and operation of these laws, and without intending to produce the individual results which flow, as we popularly say, from their operation. I again assert, therefore, that the only questions which can be raised on this subject, are the two following: "What is the nature of the blessings which the elect are chosen to enjoy?—are they external privileges merely, or spiritual and eternal blessings?" "And, if the latter, on what ground are they chosen to enjoy them? Is it a conditional, or, as far as it relates to them, an unconditional decree?" In other words, are they chosen to enjoy the blessings of eternal life (or, which is the same thing, to experience that special and holy influence which will certainly issue in their enjoyment of eternal life) on the ground of foreseen faith, or on some other ground (not in them) which God has not been pleased to reveal? Is faith, in short, the root or the fruit of election? We propose to establish, in opposition to Pelagians and Arminians, that the elect are chosen to enjoy spiritual and eternal blessings (not intending to deny, let it be observed, that there is also an election to

inferior blessings;) and that they are not chosen to enjoy them on the ground of foreseen faith and obedience.

First, our first object then is, to prove that the Scriptures speak of an election to the enjoyment of spiritual and eternal blessings. Our opponents here are the Pelagians, who affirm that election is merely the appointment of bodies of men to the enjoyment of external privileges. Through the influence of a groundless fear, that the doctrines of criminality and accountability must be overturned, if it be once admitted that the eternal destinies of men are in any respect fixed by decree, they deny that any of the Divine decrees have the least relation to a future state of existence; and affirm, not merely that none are appointed to wrath, but that none are destined to ultimate salvation. This is precisely the statement of Bishop Tomline, in his "Elements of Theology." "God is represented," he says, "in Scripture, as having predestinated the redemption of mankind, through Christ, before the foundation of the world; and, when the fulness of the time was come, he sent forth his Son to execute his gracious purpose. But it has pleased our Almighty Father, in the inscrutable councils of his wisdom, to confine the knowledge of this merciful dispensation," [how has *God confined* it? Did he not command the church to convey it to the whole world? Ought it not then to be said, that the church has confined it?] "even to this day, to a portion of the human race, and by his prescience he foresaw" [though a learned prelate expresses himself thus, is it not something like saying, that by his foreknowledge he foreknew?] "to whom these glad tidings should be communicated. Those who are blessed with the glorious light of the gospel, according to this scheme of Divine providence, may be said to be predestinated to life, because they enjoy the appointed means of salvation. Those whom God hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, are that part of mankind to whom God has decreed to make known the gospel; and, consequently, to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, does not mean actually saving them," [it would certainly puzzle a common man to discover how a person could be brought to

everlasting salvation without being saved,] “but granting them the means of salvation through Jesus Christ.” Again, “those to whom the gospel was made known, according to the foreseen purpose of God,” [the foreseen purpose! was the foresight then before the purpose?] “are said in the New Testament to be predestinated, and elect;” and he proceeds further to deny that an infallible certainty of eternal happiness, in consequence of a Divine decree, is attributed to a single Christian, throughout the New Testament.

Thus, if Bishop Tomline be a faithful expositor of Pelagianism, that system maintains that election is merely the Divine purpose to bestow upon certain individuals the means of salvation. In this it differs from Arminianism, unless Mr. Watson has given an incorrect statement of the doctrine of his own denomination; for he admits that there is a predestination of believing and obedient persons unto eternal glory;—that the language of Paul, Rom. viii. 30, “declares that true believers were foreknown, and predestinated to eternal glory.” And I cannot but think that Pelagianism, in regard to this point, has greatly the advantage over Arminianism; for, if there be a predestination of any to eternal glory, on the ground of foreseen faith, Mr. Watson ought to allow also a predestination of others to eternal misery, on the ground of foreseen unbelief. And, further, if this predestination to eternal glory be not, in the view of Mr. Watson, identical with the actual possession of eternal glory, he may be pressed by the inquiry, “How soon after the external call has been addressed to an individual (for he affirms its subsequence to this calling) does God predestinate him to the enjoyment of this glory?” Is it in the first moment of his believing the gospel? If it be, then—as he may fall into unbelief the next day—it must surely follow that, as his temporary faith secured him the blessing of predestination to eternal glory, his subsequent unbelief, though it should be only temporary, must deprive him of this blessing; and, further, that—as, according to the Arminian scheme, there may be successive periods of standing in the truth, and of rejecting the truth, to the very close of his course on earth—there must be successive renewals and abrogations of his predesti-

nation. Should this latter notion be found too whimsical to be admitted, the Arminian may deliver himself from the necessity of entertaining it, by maintaining that the predestination does not take place till the moment of the departure of the spirit from the body, when relapse is impossible; or, which perhaps would be better still, not till its entrance upon the possession of eternal glory: only, in the last case, it would unfortunately happen (i. e., for the system) that the individual would not need predestination at all!

I leave, however, for the present, the Arminian notion of conditional predestination to eternal glory, i. e., a predestination founded upon foreseen faith, (a notion which will come under examination in the proper place,) and, returning to the true Pelagian, proceed to show that the Scriptures do speak of an election to the enjoyment of spiritual and eternal blessings, as well as of an election to the possession of external privileges, or means of salvation. It may be well, however, for the reader to consider whether the latter notion is not entangled with as many difficulties as the notion of personal or individual election to eternal life. "The arrangements of Providence," says Dr. Fletcher, "are involved in the same perplexities as belong to that economy which limits to any assignable extent whatever the moral efficacy of the means of grace. If disposed to object at all to the limited distribution of Divine favour to those who have no claim on its slightest manifestations, we might naturally inquire, why should the Ephesians enjoy the dispensation of the gospel, when some neighbouring cities and provinces were destitute of it?" The existence of inequality in the distributions of Heaven, if an unequal distribution of unmerited good be ever supposed to involve in it any difficulty, is as hard to be accounted for as inequality with reference to the eternal destinies of men. Besides, it is to be further remembered, that election to the enjoyment of the external privileges of the gospel dispensation, leads naturally to a difference in the eternal destinies of men. For what are these external privileges, but the means of salvation? Bishop Tomline asserts, that God has *confined* the glad tidings of the gospel, i. e., the means of salvation, to a portion of the human race; and yet, while contending that

election to eternal life itself would be unjust, he appears to write as if he thought no difficulty was involved in the fact admitted by him, viz., that certain persons or nations only are elected to enjoy the means of eternal life. Now, since eternal life is enjoyed in the use of the means, and cannot be secured without them, what is the objection against Calvinism which may not be urged with equal force against his own system? If it be essentially inequitable to appoint some individuals to salvation and not others, must it not be equally inequitable to appoint some to the enjoyment of the means of salvation, and not others, when none can be saved without the means? It is not my present business to obviate the difficulty which is thus evidently common to both systems. I merely observe, for the present, that, when our opponent shall have relieved Arminianism from its pressure, he will have achieved an equal triumph for Calvinism.

I refer the reader, then, to the following passages in proof of the assertion, that the Scriptures teach an election, not merely to the enjoyment of external privileges, but of spiritual and eternal blessings. It may possibly become necessary to examine some of these passages a second time, when I proceed to assail the Arminian notion, that the choice of any to the latter class of blessings is conditional, i. e. founded on their foreseen faith; as I deem it better for the present to confine my attention to the specific inquiry, "What is the nature of the blessings which the elect are chosen to enjoy?" "But we are bound," says the apostle Paul to the members of the church of the Thessalonians, "to give thanks always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. ii. 13.) The sole question we raise at present is, "What is the meaning of salvation here?" It surely cannot intend the means of salvation, but salvation itself, i. e., present deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and especially the final enjoyment of the glory of heaven. Hence the apostle adds, "through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;" i. e., they are the means through the influence of which they were to be brought at length into the possession of the salvation which God

had elected or chosen them to enjoy. It is consequently impossible that salvation can here denote the means of salvation. We are saved, in the highest sense of the term, through Divine influence, and through faith; but it is not by the *belief* of the truth, surely, that we come into possession of the truth, as a revelation from God. It is not by faith that we are brought to enjoy the means of salvation. The means of salvation must be possessed previously to believing; and, therefore, we do not arrive at the enjoyment of them through or by believing.

The same sentiment is also clearly taught in the 1st Epistle, 1st chapter, 3rd and following verses. "Remembering your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, and our Father. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," &c. The 3rd and 5th verses are brought forward in proof of the statement contained in the 4th. The apostle declares that he knew, i. e., discovered evidence of the election of the Thessalonians, in the powerful influence of the gospel upon them, leading them to abound in "the work of faith, and labour of love." Now, if he had meant nothing more by election than the purpose of God to bring them to the enjoyment of the means of salvation, or nothing more than their actual possession of these means, why should he refer to the efficacy of those means upon them in proof of that fact? A man would give himself very unnecessary trouble who should gravely set himself to prove that certain persons must have had the discoveries of the gospel brought to them, because they have been converted by the gospel. That any are elected, if elected means put in possession of the means of salvation—the external privileges of the gospel dispensation—is a point attested by our senses; it is not left to be ascertained by a process of reasoning. The apostle of the Gentiles must have meant election to spiritual and eternal blessings, or he would not have referred to their conversion to God in proof of that election.

Still more conclusive, perhaps, is the language of the same

apostle, in the 8th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He affirms, in the 28th verse of that chapter, that "all things work together for good, to those that are called according to the purpose of God." He proves this assertion by showing that there is an inseparable connexion between calling and glorification. It is impossible, therefore, to doubt that every event in Divine Providence must be intended for the benefit of those who are appointed to enjoy the blessedness of heaven. All things work together for their good. Of this, as though he had said, we may be certain, "for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Should any one be able to show that I have mistaken the object for which the apostle sets before us the different links of this golden chain, the mistake would not be of material prejudice to the argument. The point which it is most essential to remember, and of this there can be no doubt, is that predestination and glorification are linked together in an union which no circumstance whatever—no agent in heaven, earth, or hell, can dissolve. "Whom he predestinated, them he also glorified." It is, consequently, impossible that, in this passage, the term predestination can merely denote appointment to the enjoyment of the external privileges of the gospel; for who will venture to say, that even the actual possession of these privileges is connected with glorification? "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" &c. "And then," adds the Saviour, "will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

In harmony with this reasoning, we learn that, at the great day, the Judge will address his people in the following language,—“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” That here is predestination no one can doubt. It is equally manifest that it is predestination to spiritual and eternal blessings. Were it contended that the choice rests upon the ground of foreseen faith, (a sentiment which will be examined

at the proper season,) I see not how any one can doubt that it is more than a mere appointment to enjoy the means of salvation.

Sufficient, I trust, has been said, to show that these Pelagians, of whom Bishop Tomline may be regarded as the type, and who deny that God has predestinated any men, on any ground, to enjoy spiritual and eternal blessings, are in direct conflict with the word of God. It will be expedient now to show the essential and radical defect of this system, when considered in relation to the object which God aims to accomplish, in the bestowment, upon any members of the human family, of the means of salvation.

The Pelagianism of Bishop Tomline contends, then, let it be observed, that the Divine purpose, in regard to man, is accomplished, and completely exhausted, by the mere act of sending the gospel to them. Predestination is the appointment of certain bodies of men to enjoy the means of salvation. When it has carried to them these means, it has finished its work. It does not advance a step beyond this. It does not act in prompting to the use of these means, or in securing their influence on the mind and conduct. It puts the gospel, indeed, into their hands, but it leaves them to work out their own salvation with it as they can; and so either practically denies the total depravity of human nature, or suspends the infinitely important question, whether the sufferings of the Son of God shall prove ultimately to have been endured in vain, on the reception which may happen to be given to the gospel testimony by those who "hate the light, and will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved." The same defect—and I venture to say that it is a radical one—attaches to the scheme of Arminianism, as exhibited by Mr. Watson; for though he believes in election to eternal life, it is a conditional election. It is founded on faith. It exists subsequently to faith; and, consequently, can have no influence in originating faith. There is no decree, according to this writer, that any man should believe, or should become the recipient of an influence which will certainly secure his believing; and, consequently,—since

God does nothing but what he decrees, and since he does not decree to exert special influence in the case of any to lead them to believe—he does *not* exert any such influence. In other words, Mr. Watson unites with Bishop Tomline, or he subverts his own system, in maintaining that what God does in securing the salvation of men, is confined to the mere act of sending to them the gospel, leaving the improvement to them; and, maintaining this, he undermines the doctrine of salvation by grace, and practically affirms that the regenerated are born by the will of the flesh, and not by the will of God.

I am aware, indeed, of the reply which both classes of our opponents—for, in their attempt to evade this obvious difficulty, they unite together—are in the habit of making; but, after repeated examinations of Mr. Watson's statements, I am constrained to say that they appear to me totally inconclusive,—to leave every difficulty just where they found it,—and to introduce others of more appalling magnitude. I am bound, I freely admit, to attempt, at least, to justify this opinion, and I proceed very cheerfully to do so.

The answer of our opponents is substantially the following, viz., that God bestows his Spirit upon all men in a measure sufficient to enable them to believe the gospel,—that he thus prevents the utter loss and waste of the blood of Christ, and secures the praise of human salvation to Divine grace. Upon this statement, I would request the reader's very close attention to the following observations:

First, if we were to concede the fact affirmed by it, viz., that a measure of the Spirit is given to all men, and which we will designate as the common, in contradistinction from the special influences of the Spirit, I should still feel compelled to inquire if it did not necessarily involve the doctrine of election. This affirmed communication of the Spirit is an act of God, having, indeed, all men for its objects; but still, it is an act; and, consequently, there must have been a previous purpose to perform this act. Would an Arminian venture to deny the general principle involved in the assertion just made, viz., that God decrees what he does? Or can he point out a difference between the actions of God in general, and the specific

action of bestowing the Spirit upon all men, of such a nature as to warrant us in concluding that, while his other actions suppose and require a decree, this does not need, and does not admit of one? The common sense view of the case certainly is, that either all the actions of God are the results of a decree, or that none are the results of a decree. If God gave life to the beast, and rationality to man, without a previous determination to do either, then he may give the Spirit to all men without a determination to bestow it; but if the former cannot be supposed, neither can the latter.

Secondly, the statement totally fails to secure the end which it is apparently designed to answer, viz., to secure to Divine grace the praise of human salvation.

God has given his Spirit to all men to enable them to believe. The faith, therefore, of those who receive the gospel testimony, must be ultimately traced to this donation of the Spirit; and thus salvation is of grace. Such would appear to be the argument of our opponents. I would ask them, then, whether the Spirit, and an equal measure of the Spirit, is given to unbelievers (i. e., to those who die in impenitency) and to believers? If they reply in the negative—or, in other words, admit that a special influence of the Holy Spirit is exerted when a man is converted to God—then God does more to secure the salvation of some men (in opposition to Bishop Tomline's axiom that God has equally enabled every man, born into the world, to work out his salvation) than of others; and since he decrees or purposes what he does, (or he would not be a Being of infinite wisdom,) this notion of special influence inevitably draws after it the hydra of eternal and personal election.

If, on the other hand, they reply in the affirmative, i. e., maintain that an equal measure of the Spirit is given to all; or, in other words, deny that any special influence of the Holy Spirit is put forth in the conversion of men, then it follows, that the faith of none is to be ascribed, simply and exclusively at least, to the influence of the Spirit,—or why does it not produce faith in all?—but partly, at any rate, to the better moral state in which this primary gift of the Spirit

found them,—or to their better improvement of a donation and privilege common to all;—an improvement in which they have no additional assistance from the Spirit of God, for that would involve in it a special operation, and a special purpose, or, in other words, the doctrine of eternal and personal election. But to affirm that the salvation of the saved is to be ascribed to their own unassisted and better improvement of the means of salvation, is, in effect, to ascribe the salvation of man to himself, and to contradict the testimony of the Holy Spirit, that it is “God that worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.”

Or, the argument may be stated in a somewhat different manner. Since some men believe the gospel, and others reject it, the faith of the former must be ascribed to themselves or to God. If Pelagians ascribe it to the former, they rescue themselves, indeed, from any difficulty which may be supposed to be involved in the opinion, that faith is the gift of God; but they leave an occasion of boasting to the believer. If, on the contrary, they ascribe it to God, then it must be the result of an influence common to all, or special to some. The latter supposition draws after it the doctrine of eternal and personal election. They seem, therefore, driven to the necessity of resorting to the former supposition. But, if a common and equal operation, or gift of the Spirit, leads to the existence of faith in the case of some, and not in the case of others, it must surely be because the former are less averse to believe, or more disposed to improve the means of grace than the latter; i. e., they are less depraved, and so require less assistance from the Spirit of God to work out their own salvation. And yet, by supposition, they receive as much assistance as those who are more depraved; i. e., those who stand in the greatest need of moral help, receive no more than those who have the least need of it; in opposition to the axiom of Bishop Tomline, that “God has equally enabled every man to work out his own salvation.” There is an ambiguity in this assertion which, it is probable, never struck the mind of his Lordship. An equal measure of aid in working out our salvation (which we are assured all men possess) may

mean a measure equal in itself; i. e., equal in all cases, in degree;—or a measure equally proportioned to the need of those who receive it. His Lordship appears to me, therefore, to be involved in the following inextricable dilemma: Either that gift of the Spirit which—to preserve even the appearance of ascribing the praise of man's salvation to God—he is constrained to acknowledge is vouchsafed to all men, is bestowed in the first sense of the term equal, i. e., in an equal degree upon all men:—in which case those who, being more obdurate, reject the gospel, are less favourably dealt with than others, inasmuch as the aid they receive is not equally adapted to meet their moral wants, (a supposition which would cause all the arrows shot by the Arminian to recoil upon himself.)—Or the supposed gift is bestowed in a degree which renders it equally proportioned to the moral need of those who receive it;—in which case it must effect the salvation of all, or the salvation of none. It is impossible to conceive that a measure of influence, equally adapted to subdue the depravity of two human beings, should succeed in the case of one, and fail in the case of the other. A power equal to a hundred would as certainly remove an obstruction amounting only to eighty, as a power of fifty would remove an obstruction of forty. That both should succeed is perfectly possible, and, indeed; absolutely certain; but that the hundred should fail while the fifty succeeds, or *vice versâ*, is utterly incredible and inconceivable.

LECTURE IV.

ELECTION.

THE PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE.

WE have shown in the preceding lecture, that the Arminian notion of a dispensation of the Spirit to all men, or of common grace conferred upon all men, to enable them to secure their salvation, does really involve in it the doctrine of election; and, further, that it does not sufficiently guard the doctrine of salvation by grace. I now proceed,

Thirdly, to observe, that this notion of common or universal grace is, as held by them, and as far as they have explained it, a self-contradictory, not to say an absurd notion. It restores to man the *ability* (such is the view they give of it) to obey God's law, to believe the gospel, and so to work out his own salvation. "Man," says Bishop Tomline, "cannot, by his natural faculties and unassisted exertions, so counteract and correct the imperfection and corruption derived from the fall of Adam, as to be able of himself to acquire that true and lively faith which would secure his salvation." He proceeds to state, in substance, that, as it would not be just in God to do more with a view to effect the salvation of one man than another, this ability to acquire true and lively faith is actually communicated to all men,—to those who believe not the gospel, and never will believe it, as well as to those who cordially receive it. In short, though his Lordship is not a proficient in the art of presenting an idea in a few unambiguous words, he evidently means that man has lost by the fall, not merely his *disposition* to do what God commands, and to believe what God reveals; but, in the true, and proper, and literal sense of the term, his *power* also. This is much more fully and distinctly stated by

Mr. Watson, who, in perspicacity, infinitely surpasses the bishop, though I fear not in candour, especially when Calvinism rises upon his view, which almost invariably produces misrepresentations so gross, that, if the "Theological Institutes" have exalted my estimate of the intellect of the writer, I am constrained to add—and I do it with deep and unaffected sorrow—they have diminished my previous conceptions of the moral dignity of his character.

I have hinted at an ambiguity which lurks in the words, power, ability, &c., when used in reference to man, and to what God requires of him. It may be expedient briefly to illustrate this point, before I lay before the reader the statements of Mr. Watson, as that illustration is adapted to show the inconsistent nature of those statements. A man then, let it be observed, may be destitute of power to perform a certain action, in two radically different senses ;—in the sense of being destitute of the physical capacity of performing the action ; and in the sense of wanting the disposition to perform it. A man who has not money, cannot give it to the destitute ; a man who has not the present disposition to be liberal, cannot give it either, but the *cannot* in the two cases is radically different. No entreaties, or promises, are in the slightest degree adapted to remove the former, but they are eminently fitted to remove the latter, *cannot* ; and may, accordingly, be consistently employed. Every one recognises and acts upon this distinction in the every day occurrences of life ; we require, therefore, that it should be recognised in religious subjects. The generality of Calvinistic divines make this distinction. They maintain that the power to obey God's laws, of which unconverted men are destitute, is not physical capacity, but disposition. They affirm that the Scriptures address no command to the human family at large, with which any man, unless he be an idiot or a madman, would be unable to comply, provided he had the disposition to comply. They hold that all that Adam lost, for himself and his posterity, was the disposition, and not the physical capacity, i. e., power, in the proper sense of the word, to do what God commands : and, on the affirmed fact, that the human race, after the fall, retain

their physical power to obey God's law, if they choose to obey, they found their belief in the great doctrine of human accountability.

Mr. Watson, on the other hand, supposes that the race lost more than disposition—that they lost power, in the proper sense of the term, to obey; that this power is re-communicated to them by what we have designated common grace; and that this imparted grace is the foundation of accountability. I refer to the following passages in proof of these statements. “All men, in their simply natural state, are dead in trespasses and sins, and have neither the *will* nor the *power* to turn to God.” (Vol. iii., p. 193.) In an attempt to show that absolute and unconditional reprobation (which doctrine I reprobate as strongly as does Mr. Watson) is contrary to the justice of God, he takes the ground, that “the reprobates must have been destroyed for a pure reason of sovereignty—or for the sin of Adam—or for personal faults, resulting from a corruption of nature, which they brought into the world with them, and which they have no *power* to correct.” (Vol. iii., p. 69.) “All except Adam and Eve have come into the world with a nature which, left to itself, *could not* but sin.” (Vol. iii., p. 67.) Again, he tells us that the promise of the Spirit finds man “without the inclination, or the *strength*, to avail himself of proclaimed clemency.” (Vol. i., p. 242.) Further, we are assured, (Vol. ii., p. 261,) “That a *power of consideration*, prayer, and turning to God, are the gifts of the Spirit; of course *it does not exist in the simply natural state of man*.” Now let it not be said that these statements of Mr. Watson contain no more than *we* every day assert, when we say that man has lost his power to obey God's law; because every reflecting Calvinist, at least, understands the term power in a sense different from that in which it is used by Mr. Watson. With the latter, the loss of power means, *if not the loss of physical capacity*, (I use this phraseology for a reason which will appear presently,) at least more than *the loss of disposition*. With the former, it is the loss of disposition, and the loss of disposition only. Yet power to obey God's law must be possessed by man, even in the opinion of Mr. Watson, for

the unconverted, he himself tells us, "cannot be guilty of rejecting the gospel, if they have no power to embrace it." (Vol. iii., p. 110.) And, again, the unconverted are required to believe for their salvation; he consequently infers that they must have power to believe. (Vol. iii. p. 4.) This power common grace communicates, and its communication forms, as I have said, in Mr. Watson's system, the ground of human accountability. The following extracts establish both these points. "The Scripture treats all men to whom the gospel is preached as endowed with power, not indeed from themselves, but *from the grace of God*, to turn at his reproof," &c. (Vol. iii. p. 111.) "It follows, then, that the doctrine of the impartation of grace to the unconverted, in a sufficient degree to enable them to embrace the gospel, must be admitted," &c. (Ibid.) "In consequence of the atonement of Christ, offered for all, the Holy Spirit is administered to all," &c. (Vol. ii. p. 259.) "The presence of the Holy Spirit is now given to man, not as a creature; but is secured to him by the mercy and grace of a new and a different dispensation, under which the Spirit is administered," not on the ground of our being creatures, but as redeemed from the curse of the law by him who became a curse for us." (Vol. ii., p. 257.) The virtues of the unregenerate are not, he says, "from man, but from God, whose Holy Spirit has been vouchsafed to *the world* through the atonement." (Ibid., p. 261.) "It is thus," he adds, finally, i. e., on account of the universal dispensation of the Spirit, "that one part of Scripture is reconciled to another, and both to fact; the declaration of man's corruption, with the presumption of his power to return to God, to repent, to break off his sins, which all the commands and invitations to him, from the gospel, imply;" without which power, thus communicated by *grace*, Mr. Watson imagines these commands and entreaties could not be addressed to him.

Now it has been said, (page 69,) that the Arminian notion of common *grace*, imparted for the purpose of communicating *power* to man to obey God's law, is self-contradictory, if not absurd. In support of this assertion, I request the attention of the reader to the following remarks. First, Mr. Watson's

notion supposes that Adam could lose, and actually did lose, his power to obey God's law, (understanding the term power to mean more than inclination, disposition, or will,) without losing his responsibility. I do not know precisely, indeed, what he meant by the term power in this connexion. There is reason to think he had not well defined it even to himself; but it is abundantly manifest that he comprehended in it more than disposition to do what God commands; and that he regarded it as essential to accountability. But how could Adam lose for himself, and for the race, what was essential to accountability? He might lose, and he did lose, chartered blessings—blessings which flowed from sovereignty. Thus he lost sovereign, sustaining grace: but surely he could not lose any thing that was essential to accountability; at least he could not lose it, and retain his accountability. Mr. Watson's principles throw him upon this dilemma: He must maintain, either that when Adam fell he continued a responsible being, without the essential requisites of responsibility; or, that he ceased to be a responsible being, on his melancholy lapse, and remained irresponsible, till common grace had restored what is essential to responsibility. Secondly, The Arminian notion is burdened with the self-evident absurdity, that it is *grace* which bestows what is necessary to accountability. No intelligent man, whose mind is unperverted by system, can fail to perceive that the essential requisites of responsibility flow from equity. There is no grace whatever in their bestowment. God requiring, as he does, the being to give an account of his conduct, is bound to impart them. Now if it be of debt, it is not of grace. Mr. Watson says, that man lost, by the fall, the power to obey God's law. This power is, however, he thinks, necessary to accountability; so that it must, consequently, be re-communicated to him. He further declares that it has been so; but the most surprising thing of all, to me at least, is, that he should represent its re-impartation as an act of common grace. Common grace! How could any thing but system veil from the conception of this perspicacious writer, that it must have been, even on his own principles, and on any principles, an act of common justice, and not of

grace? Suppose the Divine Being should determine to elevate an animal to the dignity of a responsible agent, must he not bestow upon him rationality? And would the bestowment of rationality be an act of grace? Could the gift be equitably withdrawn while the moral governor continued to demand from the animal an account of his conduct? Surely not. Adam could not lose what is essential to accountability; nor can it be bestowed by *grace*.

There remains but one more observation to be made upon the attempts of the Arminians to evade the difficulties which attach to the notion of election to the mere enjoyment of external privileges. This constitutes the Fourth observation, viz., that neither Bishop Tomline, nor Mr. Watson, has given us a distinct account of what they mean by that power to obey God's law which, as they teach, was lost by the fall, and which is re-communicated by grace. My decided impression is, that neither they, nor the Arminians in general, attach, as I have already said, any definite meaning to the term. They write as if their conceptions were very loose and indefinite, and yet as if they did not suspect this to be the case,—an evil into which all writers are in danger of falling. Because a word is familiar, and we are at no loss in regard to its general meaning, we are apt to employ it in a statement of great importance, it may be, without being aware that even we do not understand it in that particular connexion. These are not the times, however, in which indefinite and ambiguous words, or statements, can be permitted to go unexamined and unsifted. Certainly, Mr. Watson's must not thus be permitted to pass. Lamenting, I can truly say, as much as his friends, that I cannot put the question to himself, I ask his brethren, then, what was the power to obey God's law which was lost by the fall? If they intend by the term *more* than *disposition* to do what the moral governor required, I respectfully request them to specify distinctly what that term *more* comprehends. I can conceive of two senses only, in which the term power can be used in this connexion; if there are more than two, I shall consider myself much indebted to any individual who will point

them out. The two senses of which only I am at present cognizant are those which have been more than once referred to, viz., disposition and physical capacity. When, therefore, Mr. Watson affirms that man has lost both his will and his power to obey God, the language is, to my apprehension, equivalent with the declaration, that he has lost his disposition and his physical capacity to obey God. Now, it has been shown, that if he really did lose his physical capacity, he must have lost his responsibility; just as accountability ceases, in any individual, when madness supervenes. But I now seek for information, whether, in the judgment of the Arminian, Adam did lose his physical capacity to obey his Creator? *Should he reply in the negative*, then I would further inquire—since the loss was, by hypothesis, more than disposition, and yet was not physical power—what is that strange *tertium quid*, between will and physical power—partaking of the properties of neither, or rather, perhaps, being an unnatural mixture of both—which completes the amount of his loss? Will any one attempt to explain it? Is it explicable? Can it even be conceived? *Should the reply be in the affirmative*, should it be said that he lost physical power, I would ask whether he lost the whole of his physical powers, or some of them only. Had the former been the case, i. e., had he lost sensation, memory, judgment, volition, &c., he must have ceased to be a man; he must have sunk even below a brute. If it be said that he lost some of them only, I ask, which? Was it the understanding, the memory, the judgment, the conscience, &c.? Experience proves that they all remain. Degraded as man is, he has suffered no loss of any physical power essential to obedience; for there is nothing which God commands him to do which he could not do if he would. He has not lost the *power* of loving God; for the power of loving God is the physical capability of experiencing the emotion of love, and which is called into exercise when an unconverted man loves the world. He has not lost the *power* of believing the gospel; for the power of believing the gospel is that physical constitution of mind which renders him capable, in distinction from

brutes, of crediting testimony in general, and which is developed every day of his life. Ten thousand absurdities have been uttered on this subject by those who have theological words, without theological ideas; whose creed is a creed of symbols, rather than things. It is high time to begin to believe in things, rather than in words; and there can be little doubt, that all who do this will be prepared to admit that the loss which Adam sustained was a moral loss exclusively. The loss of any of the powers to which reference was made a short time ago, would have been a physical loss, converting Adam into a totally different being, in a physical point of view, and rendering it necessary that he should be subjected to a different kind of government. Besides, that which is restored to man, when he is born again, is moral, not physical, in its nature. Regeneration does not implant new physical powers; it communicates "knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness." The loss of these was, then, that which Adam sustained by the fall.

I have further to ask the Arminian, what he means by the power to obey God's law, and to believe the gospel, which he says was re-impacted by common grace. It is not power in the sense of *physical capacity*; for Adam, as we have just proved, did not lose power in this sense of the term; and all his posterity, even previously to their conversion, enjoy it. Again, it is not power in the sense of *disposition to obey and believe*; for, in this sense of the term, no man possesses power till he is renewed in the spirit of his mind. "Ye will not come unto me," said our Lord, "that ye might have life." "And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil." The Arminian, indeed, practically admits this; for the struggling against conviction by which, as he imagines, the influences of the Holy Spirit are rendered ineffectual to conversion, is surely the result of the want of a disposition to do what God requires. In short, that power to obey, and believe, which, in the creed of the Arminian, was lost by the fall, and restored again by the dispensation of common grace, resolves itself into those physical

capacities, means, opportunities, &c., which, in the creed of of a Calvinist, are essential to accountability. An opponent, incautiously setting himself to prove that it comprehends more, would find himself, when brought to the question, engaged in an enterprise as difficult as to find his way to the moon.

Having thus shown—that the Scriptures recognise certain individuals as the elect of God—that there is an election to spiritual and eternal blessings, in opposition to those Pelagians, of whom Bishop Tomline is a type, who represent election as appointment to the enjoyment of external privileges merely;—and having exhibited the radical defect of this latter system, I proceed to prove,

Secondly, that personal election to eternal life is not conditional; or, in other words, is not founded on the foreseen faith and obedience of the elect. The doctrine of Mr. Watson, and of those Arminians who think with him, is, that all who are elected to eternal glory were chosen, not as men merely, but as believing men; and I lay before the reader the strongest passage I can find in his works in support of this view of the case. “To choose men to salvation, considered as believers, gives a reason for election which not only manifests the wisdom and goodness of God, but has the advantage of being entirely consistent with his own published and express decree: ‘He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.’ This revealed and promulgated decree, we must believe, was according to his eternal purpose; and if from eternity he determined that believers, and only believers in Christ, among the fallen race, should be saved, the conclusion is inevitable, that those whom he chose in Christ, before the foundation of the world, were considered not as men merely, which gives no reason of choice worthy of any rational being, much less of the ever-blessed God; but as believing men; which harmonizes the doctrine of election with the other doctrines of Scripture, instead of placing it, as in the Calvinistic scheme, in opposition to them. For the choice not being of certain men as such, but of all persons believing; and all men to whom the gospel is preached

being called to believe, every one may place himself in the number of the persons so elected." (Vol. iii., pp. 78, 79.)

This reasoning derives any little force it may appear to possess from the circumstance of Mr. Watson's having forgotten that, though the Divine Being can form no purpose which is at variance with the general and revealed law of his government,—“He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,”—he may, yea, must entertain a purpose in his character as the sovereign Bestower of good, which shall secure the accomplishment of events which the general law of his government could bring to pass. It is impossible for Mr. W. to deny this; since God's “revealed and promulgated decree,” as he designates it, did not separate the Jews from the rest of the world, neither did it bring the gospel to Britain. There must be a purpose, additional to the general law of the Divine government, to carry the means of salvation to those nations who enjoy them. Why, then, may there not be an additional purpose still to visit certain individuals with that special influence of the Holy Spirit which will render the means effectual to their salvation? This point will, however, be more fully illustrated hereafter. Before I proceed to state the more specific objections which may be urged against conditional election, let me request the reader not to forget that it has received an answer already. This conditional election—an election founded on faith—can make no provision for the existence of faith. It leaves this all-important exercise of the mind—on which the salvation of men depends—to be originated by the grace which is dispensed, as it is alleged, to every member of the human family. Now this grace has been shown to be nothing more than physical powers, means and opportunities of believing; which, left to themselves, never did, and never will, originate faith in any human heart. Besides, I must again remind the reader that, as this grace is common, it cannot possibly account for the fact, that one believes, while another rejects, the gospel. For, if we ascribe the difference, as Mr. Watson appears to do, to the circumstance, that the former *uses* the grace communicated, and the other does not, the question still returns, why or how does the

one *use* the grace, and the other not? If the Arminian should say, that new or additional grace is given to *use* the grace previously bestowed, he abandons his system. There is, in that case, a special operation, and that involves a special purpose; or, the doctrine of personal election. If he say, on the contrary, that no new grace is given to *use* that measure which had been bestowed upon all, then I maintain, notwithstanding all that has been said, or can be said to the contrary, that the individual makes himself to differ from others by his own unassisted *use* of grace; and though Mr. W. calls this "a puzzle, used *ad captandum*," I cannot resist the conclusion, that this Arminian notion gives the praise of a sinner's salvation to himself.

In this manner Mr. Watson's notion of conditional election may be overturned; but there is a more specific mode in which the same thing may be accomplished. If, for instance, we can show that the New Testament teaches that the chosen to salvation are elected to believe, (i. e., in the sense formerly explained,) and to be holy, as well as to inherit eternal life, it will follow, that they cannot be elected to salvation on the ground of their foreseen faith and holiness. To the proof of this important point I now proceed to direct the reader's attention.

I refer, then, to the following passages, in proof that election to eternal life is not conditional, i. e., not founded upon foreseen faith and obedience, but that it is an election *to* faith and obedience; or, more generally speaking, to holiness of character, as the means by which only its merciful purposes can be accomplished. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ." (1 Pet. i. 2.) There can be little doubt that this passage is elliptical—that *συνεως* should be introduced after *εἰς ὑπακοήν*, according to the full reading which occurs in Rom. i. 5. The strangers of the dispersion are then said by the apostle to have been elected "to the obedience of faith," i. e., to yield the obedience of faith to the gospel, and also "to the sprinkling," i. e., to receive the sprinkling "of the blood of Christ;" and the blessings

they were thus elected to enjoy, were to be secured to them by the "sanctification of the Spirit," or by that special influence of the Spirit, to which the existence of faith and holiness in every human mind must be attributed; for "faith is the gift of God."

It is essential, however, to Arminianism to overturn the preceding plain explanation of the verse. Mr. Watson attempts to do it in the following manner:—"Obedience," he says, "is not the end of election, but of the sanctification of the Spirit; and both are joined with the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, as the media through which our election is effected;—elect *through* sanctification of the Spirit, &c. These cannot, therefore, be the ends of our personal election; for if we are elected *through* that sanctification of the Spirit which produces obedience, we are not elected, being unsanctified and disobedient, in order to be sanctified by the Spirit that we may obey: it is the work of the Spirit which produces obedient faith, and through both we are elected into the church of God." (Vol. iii., p. 76.)

The last words of this paragraph, "elected into the church of God," are quite irrelevant to the point in hand, and can only have been introduced by Mr. Watson through inadvertence; since, as he himself admits, the whole passage does not refer to introduction to church membership, but to heaven.

To establish his assertion that obedience, or the belief of the gospel, is not the end of election, but of the sanctification of the Spirit, he removes the comma from the word Spirit, where it is placed by, I believe, the most correct editions of the English version, and by the ordinary copies of the Greek Testament; and introduces it after obedience, where it is placed by none of them. In the former we read, "through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ." In Mr. Watson's quotation we have, "through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ." This mode of pointing, no doubt, answers his purpose here, and would seem to have been resorted to with that intention; for it is somewhat

curious that, when he has not to overthrow the notion of election *to faith*, he adopts the ordinary method of punctuation. (Vide vol. iii. p. 64.) Now, as punctuation is not of Divine authority, I should not blame Mr. W. for altering the common and generally adopted mode, if the construction of the passage required the alteration, or if a better and more consistent meaning could be elicited by resorting to it. But is this the case? I apprehend not; yea, that the construction of the passage will not admit of the alteration. *Ραντισμον* is not governed by *εν*; it is connected with *υπακοην* by *και*; and both are governed by *ες*. If, therefore, Mr. Watson maintains that we are not elected unto obedience, but sanctified unto obedience, he is bound, also, to maintain that "we are sanctified unto the sprinkling of the blood of Christ." But that would be putting the effect before the cause; for we are not sanctified unto sprinkling, &c., but sprinkled unto sanctification; the sprinkling of the blood of Christ being the cause of sanctification. Again, Mr. Watson says that the sprinkling of the blood of Christ is represented as a medium, together with the sanctification of the Spirit, by which our election is effected. I answer, that the construction of the passage will not bear this sense. The word *ραντισμον* must be in the dative to admit of it. Had the reading been, *εν αγιασμῳ Πνευματος ες υπακοην, και ραντισμῳ*, &c., Mr. Watson would have been correct. But *εν αγιασμῳ Πνευματος, ες υπακοην και ραντισμον*, &c., will, if I mistake not, admit of no rendering but that which makes obedience, i. e., the obedience of faith, and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, the joint ends of our election.

And when Mr. Watson says that our ELECTION is effected *through* sanctification of the Spirit, and through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, or that these are the MEANS of our election, I have no doubt that the language appeared, at least, to convey some meaning to his own mind, but to mine, I acknowledge, it conveys none. I understand what he means, when he says that God elects men to eternal life, (for he admits that this is the kind of election referred to here,) on the ground of foreseen faith and obedience; but I cannot

conceive the import of the expression that God **ELECTS** them to eternal life through sanctification of the Spirit. The words, I will venture to add, have no meaning. He *brings* them, indeed, to eternal life through sanctification, but he does not *elect* them to it through sanctification. There may be media of *life*, but not of *election*, any more than there can be media of creation. I know what is meant by means of instruction, of faith, of holiness, of admission into heaven ; but what are means of *election* to heaven, if the term election be taken to designate an act of choice on the part of God, and not the actual admission of persons into heaven? God chooses or elects *without* means ; but he executes his purpose *by* means. The whole of Mr. Watson's statements on this subject appear obviously to me to result from his having confounded the Divine purposes with the accomplishment of them. Thus he speaks of the actual introduction, or admission, of the Gentiles into the Christian church, as God's election of them ; whereas it was clearly the result of their election—the accomplishment of the Divine purposes in regard to them. In the same manner he represents the actual separation of our Lord's disciples from the world, as the Saviour's choice or election of them, (for if the words, "chosen you out of the world," do not refer, in Mr. Watson's opinion, to the separation, but to a previous purpose to separate, why does he say he could not have chosen them from eternity?) though it was manifestly only that choice brought into a state of accomplishment. And, in reference to a passage, we are about to examine, in which the Thessalonians are said to be chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, &c., he declares that the *election* is through sanctification,—thus identifying God's choice with the attainment of its end ; since it is salvation, and not election, that is said to be through this medium. The last remark of Mr. Watson upon the passage in Peter to which the attention of the reader has been led, deserves a passing observation. "It is the work of the Spirit that produces obedient faith." Very well ; that admission is sufficient for any Calvinist ; for if the work or influence of the Spirit produces faith, was there not a previous decree to exert this influence? "Yes,"

the Arminian may reply, "but it would not have produced faith in the case of believers unless they had *used* or *improved* the influence." In that case, I answer, it was not the influence of the Spirit that produced faith, but the believer's *improvement* of it.

The second passage to which I refer, for the purpose of proving that election to eternal life is not conditional, is the one contained in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, (chap. ii. 13, 14,) to which allusion has been already made. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." I say nothing in reference to the phrase, "from the beginning," as it does not appear to me essential to the argument. The reader will observe that there can be no dispute here, as before, in reference to the end of election; that is expressly stated by the apostle — chosen to salvation, *εἰς σωτηρίαν*; and by salvation, as we have formerly proved, is meant present deliverance from the power and guilt of sin, and more especially the enjoyment of eternal life. Mr. Watson, indeed, admits that the election here is election to salvation, in the highest sense of the word; but he says it is through faith and obedience; or, in other words, a choice of persons already believing and obedient into the family of God. It is unnecessary to repeat what has been said against the notion of election by means. Election does not admit of means, any more than creation. It is, as we have already said, the salvation, and not the election, that is here represented as being by means.

The statement of Mr. Watson, that it is a choice of believing persons into the family of God, is, however, worthy of remark, as it involves at least an apparent contradiction. Believing persons are already *in* the family of God. We become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. What, then, is that subsequent choice into the family of which Mr. Watson speaks?

The stress of the argument here, however, rests upon the

term salvation ; for as that is the end of their election, they must have been elected to all that the word includes.

We have shown that it includes more than external privileges. Mr. Watson himself admits this in a previous part of his work, though he seems here half disposed to retract that admission. Supposing, then, that the term salvation referred exclusively to the future enjoyment of eternal life, so that the passage could not be brought forwards as a direct proof that there is an election to holiness of character in the present world, yet I would ask whether eternal life does not include holiness of character, as one of its essential, and indeed main ingredients? This cannot and will not be denied. The individuals alluded to are said, then, to be elected to it through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, as the means, by the influence of which the blessing is to be secured.

Here is then election to holiness, unless holiness constitute no part of future happiness ; election to holiness through the instrumentality of certain means. It follows, then, that there must be a Divine determination to employ these means ; for when God decrees the end, he decrees the means also. In other words, these individuals must have been elected to receive the sanctifying influence of the Spirit, and so to become the subjects of that faith, by which a spiritual transformation of character is effected, and the subjects of that transformation are rendered "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Thus, if the word salvation meant exclusively eternal life, the passage would indirectly prove election to present faith and holiness. There is no necessity, however, to suppose that the term is used in this restricted sense. It doubtless comprehends present salvation,—deliverance from ignorance, prejudice, unbelief, the love and power of sin, &c., which is, in fact, glory in the bud, while eternal life is that bud expanded into the full-blown flower. To this salvation the Thessalonians are said to have been elected. The election then here spoken of, is not an election to future glory, founded on foreseen faith and obedience ; but an election *to* faith and obedience, as necessary pre-requisites to the enjoyment of this

glory, or, perhaps, more correctly speaking, as partially constituting it.

The next passage to which I refer, with a view to show that personal election is election *to* faith and holiness, and not an election founded *upon* them, is contained in Ephes. i. 3, 4. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." On this passage I observe, first, not entering upon any minute criticisms which are not essential to the precise point in controversy, that election here must be understood to denote an act of choice on the part of God, and not, as Mr. Watson too frequently represents it, the result of that choice, or the accomplishment of God's purpose in time; for the Ephesians were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. And, secondly, that the election here spoken of is undoubtedly an election *to* faith and holiness. The Ephesians were chosen in Christ, that they should be holy, &c. If, therefore, the apostle be here speaking of personal election, his words decisively settle the point I am now arguing with the Arminians. Mr. Watson, indeed, to my inexpressible astonishment, affirms that, "if the election spoken of in this passage were personal election, the Calvinistic doctrine would not follow from it, because," he says, "it would admit of being questioned, whether the choosing in Christ before the foundation of the world, here mentioned, was a choice of certain persons, as *men* merely, or as *believing men*, which is surely the most rational." (Vol. iii., p. 78.)

Did he forget, in writing this passage, that the apostle expressly declares that they were chosen, that they *should* be holy? He must surely have done so; for if they were chosen *to* holiness, they could not have been chosen *as* holy or believing men. Finding this ground untenable, Mr. Watson, with the generality of Arminians, maintains, that the apostle does not here speak of personal election, but of the election of believers as a body,—the election of believing Jews and Gen-

tiles into the church of God; in other words, "the eternal purpose of God, upon the publication of the gospel, to constitute his visible church no longer upon the ground of natural descent from Abraham," [on which ground I venture to affirm it never was constituted; but on the ground of the faith, or the professed faith, of his natural descendants in the God of Abraham; hence, on their manifest departure from that faith, when they rejected the Messiah, they were cut off from the church,] "but, upon the foundation of faith in Christ."

Now I dare not venture to say, with some Calvinists, that the words cannot possibly bear this sense. There are some expressions in the context, especially in the twelfth verse, which at first sight seem to favour it; but I cannot think that the explanation exhausts the meaning of the sacred writer. The words will as easily bear the Calvinistic interpretation as the Arminian: and the former interpretation more fully accords with the strength of the apostle's language. The individuals addressed are said to have been blessed with all spiritual blessings—to have received the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself—to have been accepted in the Beloved—to have redemption through his blood—the forgiveness of sins—to have obtained an inheritance amongst those whom God hath gathered together in one in Christ, both those who are in heaven, and who are on earth—to have been chosen in Christ that they should be holy, and without blame, and should be to the praise of the Divine glory. Can it well be supposed that the apostle would have employed language like this in reference to such as had been merely elected into the visible church? Could it be used in reference to the members of the visible church now? Does it not seem necessarily to suppose that the election here spoken of was of a higher kind—election to eternal life, securing the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, and thus laying a sure ground of confidence, that they who were its subjects (and the apostle assumed, exercising a charitable judgment, founded upon the professions and characters of the members of this church, that they had been thus elected) were in possession, or would ultimately come into the possession, of all the mighty blessings to which we

have referred? I cannot avoid drawing this inference. Could the apostle have thought that the mere introduction of the Ephesians into the visible church (and their election meant nothing more in the view of Mr. Watson) would justify him in declaring that God had blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ—that they enjoyed the forgiveness of sins—that they had an inheritance with the members of that large family of which God is the Father—that they trusted in Christ—had received the sealing of the Spirit, which is the earnest of our inheritance, or the pledge of future glory? I think not. I am constrained, by these and other considerations, to believe that election, in this passage, means personal election; and, if that be the case, it is not conditional election; it is an election *to* faith, and not an election founded *on* faith; for the apostle expressly declares that the Ephesians were “chosen in Christ, that they should be holy.”

The only other passage to which I think it necessary to refer, with a view to establish the point, that personal election is not conditional, is Rom. viii. 29, 30: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate—to be conformed to the image of his Son.”...“Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” This passage is so conclusive, that it scarcely seems to require, or even to admit of, many remarks.

The predestination cannot possibly be the choice of certain individuals into the visible church; nor can the calling be conceived to mean the external call of the gospel merely, because both are connected, by indissoluble bonds, with glorification. “Whom he predestinated, &c., them he also glorified.” And the apostle further expressly says that they were predestinated, not because they were conformed, but that they might be conformed, to the image of his Son. In other words, God determined, in harmony with the views previously given of the nature of election, (vide p. 36,) to visit them with that special and saving influence of the Holy Spirit, which would certainly lead to their reception of the truth—to their personal

sanctification by it—and thus to their meetness for the glories of the eternal world.

The reader is now requested to remember the precise point to which our argument has conducted us. We have proved, it is humbly hoped, that God has from eternity chosen certain individuals to the enjoyment of certain blessings,—that at least some of these blessings are spiritual and eternal blessings,—and that they were not chosen to the enjoyment of them on the ground of foreseen faith and obedience; but were chosen to be believing and obedient men, that they might thus finally attain to the possession of these blessings; i. e., we have proved the doctrine of eternal and personal election.

LECTURE V,

ELECTION.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE CONSIDERED.

THE course proposed in the discussion of this subject, was, first, to give a scriptural statement of the doctrine itself; secondly, to adduce proof in support of it; and, thirdly, to reply to the objections which have been urged against it.

Having finished our observations in reference to the first and second branches of the subject, we proceed,

Thirdly, to repel the objections which have been brought against the doctrine of election.

"I reject the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination," says Bishop Tomline, "not because it is incomprehensible, but because I think it irreconcilable with the justice and goodness of God."

OBJECTION 1st.—*Predestination is incompatible with the Divine goodness.*

Before proceeding directly to repel the objection, it may be well to observe, that the mode of argument resorted to by his Lordship ought not to be adopted without the utmost degree of caution. It is the very method employed by the Unitarians to bring into discredit the great doctrine of the atonement; and it is used not more legitimately by Arminians against Calvinists, than by Socinians against both. Our ignorance and prejudice render us very inadequate judges of what is, and what is not, compatible with the Divine character. It is possible that a certain mode of conduct, presenting to us the appearance of discordance with that character, might, by more ample means of judging, be made to appear in perfect harmony with all his glorious perfections. I do not venture to assert,

indeed, that we are in no case warranted to pronounce upon the truth or falsehood of a sentiment from the aspect which the Divine character is supposed to bear to it; but I confess I think the safest method, in all cases, is to bring the sentiment, whatever it may be, to the test of Scripture;—to collect together the whole of what the Bible says in reference to it;—and to make it our exclusive effort to ascertain the literal and grammatical sense of those parts of Divine revelation which treat of it. This will be found, I believe, to be the best mode of ascertaining its compatibility with the Divine character; for we may be assured that every sentiment resting on scriptural authority must be in harmony with the Divine perfections, whether we can clearly discern that harmony or not.

Recollecting the preceding caution, we may proceed to examine the objection, that “the doctrine of election is irreconcilable with the goodness of God.” It will greatly aid us here to bear steadily in mind what that doctrine really is. In fact, we have scarcely any thing more to do than to divest it of that motley and unsightly garb in which its adversaries have been wont to array it, to obtain our object. That it would be at direct variance with all just conceptions of the Divine goodness to suppose that Jehovah, when contemplating a race of *innocent moral agents*, appointed some of their number to everlasting happiness, and others to everlasting misery, we are perfectly willing to concede; nor would any one maintain this position with more decision and firmness than an enlightened Calvinist. But such is not the predestination for which we contend. Election, as explained in these pages, and as it is maintained by a rapidly increasing number of the followers of the Genevese reformer, (whether maintained by the reformer himself is of no consequence; neither John Calvin nor John Wesley ought to have the dominion over the conscience, which is sometimes given to them,) is the choice and appointment of certain individuals to the enjoyment of good, and good only. It is the Divine purpose to bring some of the human race, all of whom the purpose contemplates as sinners, to faith and holiness as the means, and to the happiness and glory of heaven, as the result. It is not a decree to destroy the rest;

it is not even, as we have seen, a decree not to save them. All that can be said is, that there is in the Divine mind a decree to save the elect, and not a decree to save the non-elect. Now if there had been an obligation resting upon God to save man, there would doubtless have been a decree to save all men; and the non-existence of a decree to save the non-elect would certainly be a violation of goodness. But if God were under no obligation to save men;—if, without any violation of goodness, he might have left the whole race to perish, which an Arminian must admit, or he makes salvation to be of debt, not of grace, then there is no principle on which it can be maintained, that a decree to save a part of the race only violates goodness, but this, viz., that the goodness which God manifests to some of his creatures, he is bound to manifest to all;—a principle which will lead to infinite embarrassment and contradiction. Mr. Watson agrees with us in his views of the Adamic dispensation. He admits that the standing or falling of the race was suspended on the conduct of the public head of the race;—that the curse included in it death temporal, spiritual, and eternal. How then can the conclusion be avoided, or evaded, that the whole race must have suffered all these consequences of transgression, but for *the interposition of mercy*? And, since it was mercy that interposed, there could not have been any obligation resting upon God to interpose; for obligation and mercy are totally incompatible notions. Let us suppose, then, that in these circumstances God had only *so* interposed as to open a door of hope, or to provide the means of salvation, for a part of the race merely, when he was not bound to provide the means of salvation for any; would his conduct, in leaving the remaining part to suffer the consequences of the breach of the Adamic dispensation, have been to them a *violation* of goodness? Certainly it would not have been a *manifestation* of goodness; but how could it have been to them more truly a *violation* of goodness, than the Divine conduct, in providing the means of salvation for man, and not for fallen angels, is a violation of goodness towards the latter? When there is no claim to deliverance, it cannot be said that the non-provision of deliverance, or

of the means of deliverance, is incompatible with the Divine goodness. Mr. Watson must pull down his own system; he must unsay every thing that he has said in reference to the original covenant with Adam, and to the consequences of its violation,—which consequences he admits have overtaken the race, in that state of condemnation and depravity in which every member of the human family enters the world,—before he can consistently maintain, that even the provision of the means of salvation for a part of the race only would be a violation of Divine goodness, in reference to the rest.

But this, we think, is not the true state of the case. It is admitted by most modern Calvinists, and in subsequent Lectures I shall endeavour to show that they are right in this admission, that the means of salvation have been secured for the whole race. God has provided an atonement of infinite value—"the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sins." He proffers salvation, on the ground of this atonement, to the whole family of man—to all, at least, who hear the gospel. All men are invited, and all are equally welcome to come to the Saviour; and all who choose to go to him shall unquestionably be saved. Election does no more than dispose certain individuals to comply with the invitations of mercy, by securing that special influence of the Holy Spirit which makes them willing in the day of God's power. "But," it will perhaps be said, "this influence should be exerted upon the minds of all, since the want of it leaves those to whom it is not imparted, destitute of the power to avail themselves of the means of salvation, and every view we take of the Divine goodness constrains us to believe that such power ought to be imparted to the whole race." Now, if it were true that Calvinistic principles did involve the notion that the non-elect are left without power to secure their salvation, it might be fairly doubted whether, even in that case, they would impeach the Divine goodness; for, if God were not bound to provide the means of salvation for any, how can he be bound to impart power to all to use those means? Not doing what he is under no obligation to do, or all that he is able to do, is not inconsistent with perfect goodness; or what shall we say

of the fact, that there is no provision of mercy for fallen angels? But we ask the opponents what they mean by the term power in the objection as stated by them? Do they mean power in the sense of physical capacities, means, and opportunities of salvation? Or, power in the sense of disposition to avail themselves of those means and opportunities? In the former sense all men, as we have seen, (*vide*, p. 70,) possess power to secure their salvation—power to love God; for his character is infinitely amiable, and they are physically capable of experiencing the emotion of love; and, consequently, they have power to do all that he commands. In the sense of disposition, even our opponents do not believe that all men possess power to secure their salvation; for, on their own principles, numbers do not secure it, because they are not *disposed* to secure it. It is worthy of especial remark, that the notion of common grace, or grace dispensed to all men on the ground of the atonement, does not relieve the Arminian from any difficulty on this point, which he conceives to embarrass the Calvinistic scheme. The only obstacle to a sinner's salvation, now that the door of hope has been set open to all men by the atonement, (I leave those Calvinists who suppose that the door has not been set open to all, to answer for themselves as they best can; I am about as far removed from them, as from the Arminians,) is his want of disposition to be saved. "Why *will* ye die?" &c. "Ye *will* not come unto me," said Christ, "that ye may have life." Now, if common grace does not restore to all men a *disposition* to be saved, (and we have the evidence of fact that it does not,) it does not remove the only obstacle to their salvation. It does not impart, we might retort upon them, the *power* to be saved. Yes, replies the Arminian, it gives them sufficient grace or power to be saved, *if they improve that grace*. If they do this! Well, and does not the Calvinist maintain that all men have power to secure their salvation, *if* they are disposed to use that power as they ought to do? What advantage, then, has Arminianism, on this point, over Calvinism? Surely none at all. The common grace of our opponents just restores to the whole race what we contend the race never lost, and could not lose, because

essential to accountability. The only difference is, that the power of which both parties speak was, as the Calvinist thinks, bestowed by equity; and, as the Arminian imagines, by grace. The stubborn uncompromising fact is, that God has not given to all men a disposition to work out their own salvation; or, which is the same thing, has not exerted upon all men that special and holy influence which would have certainly led to the existence of the disposition. (Will an Arminian deny that he could have done this? If he should, he has sunk into Atheism.) The same difficulties, in reference to the Divine goodness, press, and equally press, (if there be supposed to be any difficulties at all,) upon both systems. The resolution of the difficulty appears to me to be this,—*that perfect goodness does not require God to do every thing to promote the happiness of his creatures, which he is able to do; nor to bestow the same measure of aid, and of the means of happiness, upon all.*

I have only one more remark,—not very intimately connected, indeed, with the preceding train of reasoning, but yet, as it appears to me, of some importance,—to make before I proceed to the consideration of another objection. The threatening by which the tree of knowledge of good and evil was guarded did not contemplate the extinction of the race; or, to speak more correctly, it was not a threatening that, in case of disobedience, the race should not exist. Had that been the case, as Dr. Russell remarks, and the remark is of great importance, we should exist *now* only in consequence of the interposition of Christ, and could have no connexion with Adam as a federal head. The depravity of a moral kind which cleaves to us by nature could not be the result of Adam's transgression; since the conception of its being such would involve the absurdity that we suffer something which was not included in the original threatening. And what is that but in effect saying, that, if any human law threatens to imprison a man if he commit a certain offence, it may afterwards justly hang him for that offence? The language of God to Adam was, on the contrary, a threatening that, if he transgressed, the condition of the race should, in every point of view, be

seriously affected by his transgression;—that that sovereign and holy sustaining influence which is the exclusive source of every thing spiritually good in man should be *withdrawn* from him, and *withheld* from the race, in token of the moral Governor's disapprobation of his sin. The violation of the Adamic dispensation must, then, have drawn after it universal transgression, and universal punishment, *but for the interposition of mercy*. Now, if mercy had not interposed, and it was not obliged to interpose, would universal punishment have been incompatible with the Divine goodness? If our opponents answer in the negative, as they must do, we may further ask them, how a decree, resting on reasons which are not revealed, *to exempt some from punishment*, can be more irreconcilable with the goodness of God than the actual infliction of punishment upon all?

OBJECTION 2.—*Predestination is incompatible with the justice of God.*

In examining this objection, it will be again necessary to bear in mind what the doctrine of election really is; and, in addition to this, to refer to the rule by which the equity of God's conduct towards moral agents is to be tried and ascertained. Till we know what justice requires, it is manifestly impossible for us to form an enlightened opinion, whether a particular decree, or a certain mode of conduct, is a violation of justice or not.

I commence my remarks on this subject, then, by observing that justice requires a moral governor to give, and is satisfied by his giving, to every individual what is due to him. When every person, over whom the authority of the governor extends, has received from him to the full amount of his claims, every thing has been done that justice requires, and none have any right to complain. All this is so perfectly self-evident, that there is no controversy in regard to it; indeed, there can be none. It is only when we come to specify the claims which the creature possesses upon the Creator, or to state what is due from God to man as a subject of moral government, that any marked and radical difference of opinion commences. To this point, then, it becomes us to direct our

particular attention; and the following remarks in reference to it are submitted to the reader.

To a creature, contemplated in that relation exclusively, the Creator manifestly owes nothing. He might strip him of all that he possesses, yea, deprive him of existence itself, without doing him any wrong. All that he has, even life itself, must be included in the class of sovereign gifts, (for he could not merit any thing before he was brought into being,) and a sovereign gift may at any time be resumed. God does the beast no wrong when he takes away its life.

To an innocent creature, whose life is destined to be perpetuated, some have said that the Creator owes the means of happiness. The late Bishop of Lincoln, indeed, in one of the most remarkable passages of his remarkable volume, affirms that He possesses an abstract right to destine such a creature, as innocent, to suffering, either temporary or eternal. Both opinions appear to me incorrect, (and the latter, as avowed by an Arminian, self-contradictory and absurd,) for an innocent creature must be, as we have seen, (vide p. 19,) a subject of moral government, and so must be contemplated along with the subjects of moral government.

To an accountable creature the Creator owes a revelation of the law, or sufficient means of knowing the law, (the equity of the law as established by God is pre-supposed here,) by which he is to be hereafter judged; and physical capacities, or powers, which render him capable of yielding the obedience required of him. He must have, in contradistinction from brutes, an intellect capable, if rightly exercised, of understanding what the moral Governor requires of him. He must have motives presented to him,—i. e., the promise of some great good, adapted to his intellectual and moral nature, if he yield obedience; and the threatening of some great evil, if he determine to withhold it,—to induce him to do what is thus required: for motives are the instruments of moral government. He must have the power of determining, or the faculty of choice or volition; for it is essential to moral government that the proximate cause of moral actions should be in the creature; and not in the instinct of the creature, as

in the case of animals, but in the determination or volition of the creature: and, finally, he must be free from physical constraint and restraint, or left free to choose what appears to him good, and to reject what appears to him evil. Were any thing more than the qualifications just enumerated—such, for instance, as a disposition to do what the Creator enjoins—necessary to accountability, it would be impossible, as will more fully appear afterwards, to erect a system of moral government at all; or, at any rate, to secure any thing like a fair trial of the subjects of that government.

Further, such a system having been established, and its subjects having received every thing that is essential to accountability, they would have an indisputable right to require, at the end of their probationary course, that they should be judged by *the* law (and not another) under which they had been placed; and, on the supposition of their having preserved their integrity, that all the blessed fruits and consequences of obedience should be awarded to them.

Let us now apply these general and introductory remarks to the actual condition of mankind. Have they preserved their integrity? Has even one of the race preserved his integrity? What saith the Scripture? When “the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God,” he found that all had gone out of the way, that there was not one that did good, no, not one.*

In these circumstances the creature, at the close of his probationary course, could have no claim upon the moral Governor to the reward of obedience. Having exposed himself to punishment by disobedience, Jehovah might have executed upon him the sentence of the law which he had broken. Justice

* It is of no consequence to the argument whether the plan of salvation contemplated the race as fallen in Adam merely; or whether it cast a prospective view, if I may so speak, over that universal depravity of the race which the Divine Being must have foreseen would be the consequence of their fall, unless mercy should interpose. It is enough for the argument that this plan contemplated the race as sinners, and was a provision to rescue them from their prostrate condition.

would not have been violated by his so doing; nay, justice would seem to require him to do so. The condemnation of all would have been an act of justice. The condemnation of each separate individual would have been an act of justice,—an act of justice in itself, without any reference to any other act, and upon the moral character of which no other act could effect any change. And, if the condemnation of all would have been an act of justice, a decree to condemn all would, of course, have sustained the same moral character; no individual would have had it in his power to say that wrong was done to him by a determination that, in his case, the sentence of the law should take effect.

We advance now to the precise point to which the whole of the preceding statements have been intended to conduct us; for the question, which is in fact the very turning point of the inquiry, now presents itself, viz., “Would the act of leaving some individuals to suffer the vengeance due to their crimes, which would have been confessedly a righteous act, if all had been left, become an unjust one by the act of rescuing others?” Is it possible, or conceivable, that an act of mercy to one—undeserved mercy, of course, for there is no *deserved mercy*—arbitrary mercy, if you will, to one, can convert an act of equity towards another into an act of injustice and cruelty? Surely common sense, unbiassed by system and prejudice, must say, that the character of the condemning act must remain what it would otherwise have been, and that, if any exception at all be made, it should be made against the saving act and decree. I apprehend, then, that before Arminians can prove that Calvinistic predestination (admitting that it includes a decree to permit the condemnation of some, or even a decree that they shall be condemned, resting, as it must do, on their disobedience) is irreconcilable with the justice of God, they must be able to show that the condemnation of all would have been unjust; since, as it has been just observed, an act of unmerited mercy to one cannot convert an act of justice towards another into one of oppression and cruelty.

To these statements they will doubtless reply, that equity

requires a moral Governor to act with perfect impartiality,—to make no difference in his treatment of those who equally deserve the expressions of his favour, or the inflictions of his wrath. They are in the habit of reminding us that, where there exists no shade of difference in the guilt of certain individuals, involved in the same crime, the moral Governor cannot without injustice pardon some, while he condemns and executes others. They tell us, that what would have been a pure act of justice towards the latter, if all had been executed, becomes to them an act of injustice by the unmerited escape of the former. Here, no doubt, is the point of difficulty on the Calvinistic scheme, since its tenets teach that the mercy shown to the elect was not attracted towards them by their superior worth, or even by their inferior desert of punishment.

Let us, then, examine this point a little more at large. The moral Governor, it is alleged, must make no difference in his treatment of those who equally deserve the expressions of his displeasure. Either all must be pardoned, or all punished; but one must not suffer, while the others escape. Now to me, I acknowledge, this assertion does not carry the light and evidence of a moral axiom along with it. That none of them must endure a greater amount of punishment than they deserve, is abundantly manifest. But that all must suffer equally—that the moral Governor must make no difference in his treatment of them, save that which may be supposed to result from the varied degrees of their guilt, is another and a very different thing. Still, I am ready to admit, in reference to a human moral governor, that equity does require him to act, generally and habitually at least, in the manner stated by our opponents; and when he pardons some, who were implicated with others in the same general crime, to do it on the ground that the shade of their criminality is a degree lighter than that of the rest. The great end of punishment, namely, the prevention of crime, could not be secured unless such were the general conduct of the governor. Yet there are cases of exception even in human moral governments,—cases in which the happiness, and even the safety, of the state require that justice should unsheath its sword, and smite some of the guilty

body, though the nicest casuistical balances may be unable to detect the slightest difference in the degree of the criminality of the whole ; but some must suffer for the sake of example : and the great end of punishment having been sufficiently secured by their death, the rest, though equally guilty with their less fortunate companions, may be permitted, and are permitted, to escape.*

Now the reader is especially requested to take notice, that the whole force of the Arminian objection we are now considering, rests upon the assumption, that the difference in the conduct of God towards a lost and condemned race, implied in the doctrine of election—visiting some of the race with that special influence of the Holy Spirit which leads them to seek salvation, and not visiting the rest with that influence—is a difference in his conduct as the moral Governor of the race. If we can show, then, that there is really no difference in his conduct towards the subjects of his government, *in that relation*,—that, sustaining, as he does, this most important office, he acts in it with all the impartiality which our opponents, or, indeed, any one else can possibly desire, we shall obviously break the force of the objection, if not entirely annihilate it. What, then, they will be disposed to reply, is it not true that, on your principles, God decreed to deliver some from the ruins of the fall, and did not, even on the most moderate statement

* I once thought, and I believe many think, that the end of punishment in the Divine government, and in the case of human governments, is not the same ;—that, under the latter, bonds, fines, imprisonment, and death, are not *punishment* properly so called, but mere suffering inflicted by law for the prevention of crime ; whereas the future misery of the finally impenitent will be strictly and literally punishment :—and that, on this account, it has come to be considered, in reference to human proceedings, hard and unjust, that while of two criminals, equally guilty, one is spared, the other should be sacrificed merely for the sake of example, and to promote the general good ; but that, in reference to the Divine proceedings, there is no basis for this feeling, since punishment with God is, properly speaking, punishment. I now doubt, however, whether the end of punishment in the Divine government differs from that of human government. Surely punishment is not an ultimate end. An infinitely benevolent Being can have no abstract delight in inflicting it. He must have some object in view. And what can that object be but the promotion of his own glory by thus placing a barrier against the inroads of rebellion ?

of your views, decree to save others? And is it not further true, that, on the Calvinistic system, he exerts an influence upon the former to secure their salvation, which he does not exert upon the latter? No, I reply, it is not true that he does either the one or the other as the moral Governor of the world. On the contrary, though, in his character as Sovereign, great disparity may be observed in his conduct towards men, yet, as a moral Governor, he acts with the most exact equality and uniformity.

Nor let this distinction between what some have ventured to call the private and the public character of Jehovah, i. e., between the relation sustained by him to mankind as Sovereign and as moral Governor, be stigmatized as a fiction got up for the occasion, for it is frequently recognized amongst men; and we admit, without the slightest hesitation, that an individual may do many things, as a man, which he cannot and ought not to do, as a ruler or a judge. If two persons should present themselves in a court of justice, suing for the recovery of what they considered just debts, the judge, sitting on the bench, must only grant what the law awards to them. Should they fail to make good in law their claim to what they demand, no upright judge could award them any thing as a *judge*, not even a penny. But if, compassionating their situation, he, as *an individual*, were to present them with a sum equal to what the hard decision of the law had just placed beyond the reach of their hopes, who could consider this conduct a just subject of complaint? Or if, as *an individual*, he chose to befriend one, and not the other, would the latter be entitled to represent himself as unjustly dealt with? Surely not. The justice which, as moral Governor, he dispenses, is the property of the community; every one has a claim to an equal measure of it. But the wealth which enables him to administer to the necessities of the rejected suitor is his own; and every one feels that he has a right to do what he will with his own.

Now, it is not in his public, but in his private character that any difference is to be traced in the conduct of God towards the beings whom he has formed. It is not in the relation of a ruler or a judge, but of a Sovereign, the original source of

being and of blessedness, who owes nothing to any of his creatures, as creatures, and has a most unquestionable right to do what he will with his own. The superior favour, which, according to the Calvinistic scheme, he manifests towards some of his creatures, is not displayed to them as subjects of his moral government, but as the creatures of his power; upon whom he has a most unquestionable right, as we have already proved, to bestow whatever measure of good he pleases. It is difficult to see how our opponents can refuse to accede to the propriety of this distinction; for if it be true, as they affirm it is, that there can be no inequality or difference in the conduct of God as a moral Governor towards his subjects,—and if it be further true, as it unquestionably is, that there exists a great disparity as to the actual amount of good which different orders of intelligent beings receive from him, how can they account for the bestowment of the superior measures of good, without supposing that Jehovah sustains a double relation to mankind, in one of which relations it may be competent for him to do what in the other would either be inexpedient or improper?

The point we are now considering deserves, and perhaps demands, a little more elucidation.

The predestinating decree then, let it be observed, was not passed by God in his rectoral character, or as the moral Governor of men. It emanated from him as a Sovereign, retaining the right, as we have seen, (vide p. 21,) even after the establishment of a system of moral government, (the establishment of which merely binds him to render unto all their due,—and to refrain from doing what might tend to frustrate the great object sought to be attained by that government,) to bestow what measure of good upon his creatures may seem right in his sight. Precisely similar remarks may be made in reference to the execution or accomplishment of this decree in the actual salvation of its subjects. Indeed, election, and effectual calling, are so necessarily the subjects of the same moral character, that they may be considered as one act: at all events, the remarks which apply to the one are clearly applicable to the other. The views, then, which

we entertain upon this important subject may be thus farther developed.*

Contemplating, as Jehovah did, the whole race of man as lying in a state of condemnation and depravity, in consequence of their apostasy, and as being utterly unable to rescue themselves, he graciously determined, as a Sovereign, to provide an adequate basis for their salvation. He resolved, on the ground of an atonement of infinite value to be made in the fulness of time by his Son, that pardon should be offered to the human race generally,—that commissioned messengers should carry the proclamation of mercy to every creature under heaven,—that they should testify of the value and efficacy of the Saviour's blood,—invite all, without exception, to come and wash in it, that they might experience actual deliverance from guilt and pollution,—and declare that whosoever believed their testimony should be saved, while all who rejected it should be condemned.

The execution of this astonishing plan led to the establishment of a grand system of moral government in the world, the basis of which is sovereign mercy. Its laws, designed to show men their awful state,—its invitations to return back unto God,—its promises of acceptance with him if they comply with these invitations, and its threatenings of future punishment if they reject them, constitute the instruments of this government. Now, as the gospel which contains these precepts, and invitations, and promises, and threatenings, is commanded to be preached to every creature, and as it would have been enjoyed by all men, had the church been obedient to the heavenly command, and had men in general been as zealous in the pursuit of spiritual, as they are of worldly blessings, it is manifest that the conduct of God, as the moral Governor of

* I cannot but apprehend that a part of the objection which is felt by many against the doctrine of election results from the following misconception. They seem to imagine that God's choice of the elect immediately rescues them from condemnation ; not taking into their account the avowed and recorded sentiments of most Calvinists at least, that the fall of Adam was succeeded by a dispensation of mercy which set open the door of hope to all men ; and that election only secures the deliverance of the elect from condemnation, by disposing them to accept that mercy which is freely offered to all.

men, is marked by perfect uniformity and impartiality. There is not the slightest difference in his proceedings towards the whole of the human family, in *this character or relation*. In reference to those who possess the gospel, (and we need not for the present carry our observations beyond them,) it is manifest that he does not prescribe one law for this man, and another for that; that he does not promise mercy to some transgressors, and not to others; but that, on the contrary, he requires the same conduct from all; addresses the same invitations to all; offers the same inducements to all; issues the same threatenings and promises to all; and, finally, that he will deal with all that accept the offered mercy, and with all who reject it, precisely alike at the great day of account. "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." If, in addition to this, he touches the hearts of some by his grace, and so secures the origination of a disposition to sue for mercy, which Calvinism allows and teaches; or if he decrees to do this, which is the same thing as far as the difficulties of the subject are considered, he does this, not in his public, but in his private character, i. e., not as a moral Governor, but as a Sovereign. He does it as JEHOVAH, the exclusive source of being and of blessedness, who did not and could not deprive himself, by establishing a system of moral government, of his inherent right to impart to his creatures any species or any degree of good which is not incompatible with the great ends of that government. Suppose a number of individuals had thrown off the yoke of subjection to a temporal monarch; suppose they were tried on the charge of having been found in arms against the government—were found guilty and condemned. "They must be dealt with," say our opponents, "alike. If a proffer of pardon be made to one, on condition of his sending to the sovereign an humble petition for mercy, it must be made to all. If one be executed, all," they affirm, "must be executed; since, on the supposition of there being no shade of difference in their guilt, it would be unjust to pardon one, and execute the rest." Now suppose we were obliged to acknowledge the truth of these assertions, might we not address to the objector the following inquiry?

The judge who tried these unhappy individuals is obliged, you say, *as a judge*, to deal with all alike; but is he not a man, as well as a judge? And if in his private capacity he choose to use his influence with some of their number (in whom various circumstances had led him to take especial interest) to induce them to humble themselves before the sovereign—to confess their crime, and to sue for mercy, (supposing them to be averse to do this, which is true of all sinners;) or, if he could go beyond the power of moral suasion—could touch and subdue their rebellious spirits by an energy above that which is granted to man, and thus induce them to implore that pardon without which he cannot, as a judge, dispense it,—what objection could be reasonably urged against his doing either the one or the other? What injustice would be done to those on whom, as a man, he exerted no such influence? What obligation towards them would he violate? All that could be said would be, that, while he left the latter to the operation of strict equity, as he had a clear right to do, he manifested undeserved kindness to the former. And what is this but the doctrine of election, or of effectual calling, which is the accomplishment of its merciful decree?

Should it be said that it is not enough for the moral Governor merely to open the door of mercy, and thus to offer salvation to all,—that, in addition to this, he must impart the disposition to accept of it, I answer, that this cannot be the case, because, in point of fact, he has not imparted this disposition to all, (to deny that he could have produced the disposition is to sink into Atheism,) and, therefore, cannot be under an obligation to impart it. I answer, further, that all that God is bound to impart are, physical capacities of understanding, believing, loving, choosing, obeying, &c.,—and those moral means and inducements which are in themselves adapted to originate the state of mind which he requires—NOT THE STATE OF MIND ITSELF.

Should our opponents further reply, that they only mean to affirm that the moral Governor is bound, on the Calvinistic doctrine of the entire impotence of man to every thing that is spiritually good, to impart the disposition, I answer, first,

that this entire impotence of man, without the aid of grace, is claimed by Mr. Watson, as an Arminian as well as a Calvinistic doctrine; and that the common grace, of which they speak, does not impart the disposition; the difficulty is, then, as great with them as with us. I answer, secondly, that the objection is founded on the principle, that Jehovah cannot with any propriety invite, entreat, or command a man to do any thing which he is morally unable to do, or, in other words, indisposed to do; for moral inability to do that which is good, is nothing more than indisposition to do that which is good.

And, maintaining this principle, they must either deny, on the one hand, that the word of God addresses invitations, entreaties, and commands to sinners; or deny, on the other hand, that sinners are morally unable to comply with them. If they choose the former part of the dilemma, they run into Antinomianism; if they choose the latter, they virtually deny the total depravity of man, previous to his conversion to God; for if there be in the case of any man power, in the sense of disposition, to do what is spiritually good, that man is a holy man. Thus, the notion of common grace does not extricate them from the objection which they urge against Calvinism; for either it gives the disposition to accept the salvation which God offers to all men, or it does not. If it give the disposition, then a sinner is holy before he is regenerated, which Arminians do not allow. If it do not give the disposition, then common grace leaves an individual as much destitute of power to do what God commands, and to work out his own salvation, as they are in the habit of contending he is left by the scheme of Calvinism.

From the whole, it appears that physical capacities—moral means and inducements, constitute the ground of accountability; that these the moral Governor bestows upon all men;—so that his conduct in that relation is distinguished by absolute impartiality—obligation being in all cases proportioned to privilege.

It further appears, that, without some other influence besides that of moral means, sinners will not, in point of fact,

sue for mercy;—that this influence, it was resolved, by the decree of election, to put forth;—that it proceeds from God, not as a moral Governor, but as a Sovereign—in which character he is not bound to render an account of his conduct, and may do what he will with his own;—and finally, that, on these accounts, the objections of our opponents against the justice of the predestinating decree are null and void.

That there are difficulties connected with this subject, it would be worse than foolish to deny; but that both the philosophical and scriptural difficulties which embarrass the system of Arminianism are greater than those which attach to Calvinism, I have not the slightest doubt.

LECTURE VI.

ELECTION.

OBJECTION 3.—*Predestination is incompatible with the free agency and accountability of man.*

The argument of our opponents is as follows. If Jehovah has determined what shall be the everlasting condition of all men,—and if, in addition to this, he has decreed every event which takes place, every event must be a necessary event, and it is impossible that man can be a free agent.

Now the reader will not forget, and it is important to remember it here, that the preceding pages do not represent the eternal condition even of the elect as being directly determined by Divine decree. We have formed our statements upon this subject under the guiding influence of the moral axiom, “God does what he decrees, *and decrees only what he does.*” All that is done by him, accordingly, in effecting the salvation of the elect—the exertion of that regenerating, and preserving, and confirming influence of the Holy Spirit, &c., by which they are certainly brought ultimately (though in a manner adapted to their intellectual and moral nature) to the glory of heaven—is decreed by God. But as the ungodly destroy themselves,—as God does nothing to effect their destruction, there is no occasion, and, indeed, no room for any decree in reference to it. We have, accordingly, defined election to be a decree to save, and not a decree to destroy. In what respect it may be said that every event is the subject of a Divine decree, will probably be more fully unfolded in the subsequent discussion.

Before we proceed to examine the force of the objection, it may be well to remember, that, if it really present any difficulty, we shall not rescue ourselves from its pressure by

deserting from the Calvinistic standard; unless, indeed, we proceed to deny the foreknowledge of God; and, in that case, difficulties of yet more appalling magnitude would rise up into view. It is manifest that, with a mere change of words, the same objection may be urged against the system of those Arminians who believe in the Divine prescience. "If God foresees all future events, those events must be necessary or certain,—and man is not a free agent." A free action, in the Arminian sense of the term, is one which may or may not take place,—one which depends altogether on the arbitrary decision of the will of the actor,—a decision unaffected by, or at any rate certainly not caused by, motives, for it may be at direct variance with motives. Now such an action must be an essentially contingent action. It cannot be certainly future. Contingency and certain futurity are incompatible notions. But, if an action be foreseen, it must be as certainly future as if it were decreed. Predestination does not, then, more necessarily interfere with free agency than foreknowledge.

Before we can estimate the force of this objection against the doctrine of predestination, it will be necessary to ascertain in what free agency consists, and to show when any being may be said to possess it. With the meaning of the term agent, all are familiarly acquainted. An agent (limiting the application of the word to intelligent beings) is the doer or performer of an action. A free agent is one who is at liberty, i. e., free to act as he chooses. "Freedom," says Dr. Williams, "as applied to an agent, in my conception, is properly and consistently expressive of a negative idea—not a power or a faculty, but exemption related to the will. It is, properly speaking, the property, not of the will of a moral agent, but of the moral agent himself." Every being who is not restrained by physical force from doing what he chooses, and who is not compelled by the same force to do what he does not choose, is a free agent. It is, therefore, manifest that all the moral agents of whose existence we have any knowledge, are possessed of freedom. God is a free agent; "He doeth whatsoever he pleases among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth." Holy angels are free agents; fallen spirits are free

agents; the whole of the human race, in the great majority of their actions, both before and after their conversion to God, are free agents;—because their actions are not compulsory. They are under no physical constraint or restraint. Their conduct is in accordance with volition, or the result of it. They are not constrained to act in opposition to volition. If the physical energies of any being are laid under restraint by an act of power, so that he cannot do the things which he would, he is not a free agent. But, if he is at liberty to do what he chooses, he is a free agent, whatever, in point of fact, he may choose to do. No bias of the will, consequently, however powerful, to any particular mode of conduct, interferes with the free agency of any being; since freedom, as we have seen, is not properly predicated of the will of an agent. Were the case otherwise than we have now stated, Jehovah could not be a free agent; for, so entire and powerful is the bias of his mind towards holiness, that he cannot do that which is evil. The devil could not be a free agent; for, in consequence of an opposite bias, he cannot do that which is good. Now if Jehovah is a free agent, though morally unable to do evil, and if it is certain that the devil is a free agent, though morally unable to do good, it cannot surely be denied that man may be a free agent, although the actual bias of his mind should be towards evil, only evil, and that continually.

It is of vast importance to form clear conceptions of the meaning of the term freedom, or, as it is otherwise denominated, free agency, or free will, in its application to a moral agent. It is essential to remember the statements just made, that it is a property of the agent himself, and not of his will; and that the term expresses merely a negative idea,—exemption from physical constraint or restraint. There are some Calvinists, even, whose conceptions on this subject are exceedingly obscure. Adam, they think, was possessed of freedom in a moral sense when he came from the hands of his Maker, but he lost it, they imagine, by transgression,—thus evidently identifying free agency with freedom from a bias to sin, and ascribing it to the will, and not to the agent himself. But, if the reader has gone along with me in the previous statements,

he will at once see that Adam was as truly a free agent after he had lost his primitive holiness, as while he retained it; because he was equally free from all physical constraint or restraint in his actions, and invariably did the things that he would. And this is in reality the only sense in which freedom can be ascribed to man.

I do not forget that Arminians are in the habit of attributing a different, and, as they imagine, a higher kind of freedom to man than that which has been alluded to above. They commit, in short, a double mistake. They ascribe freedom to the will itself, and not to the agent,—and they attribute to the will what has been called a self-determining power. When the strongest motives are presented to the view of an individual, and are even properly appreciated by the mind, his *will*, they say, may choose to be influenced by them, or the contrary. And this power—the power of submitting to motives, or of resisting them—they consider essential to moral freedom. It is not enough that a man is free as to his actions; his will also must be free, or he cannot be a free agent.

Every one who has reflected much upon this subject must be aware of the ambiguity which lurks in the terms, “power to choose,” &c., “the will must be free,” &c., employed by our opponents; and how much the difficulty of grappling with them is increased by that ambiguity. In presenting a few remarks upon this subject to the reader, I will then,

First, endeavour to clear away somewhat of that ambiguity. The will must be free, say our opponents; the determination must not be a forced determination; the choice must be free, as well as the action. Now, it is manifest, that language is here used in reference to volitions, which can only be properly applied to actions. An action may be free, or forced, but volition is by its very nature essentially free. A forced volition is an incongruous idea. It is compulsory voluntariness. And when it is said the choice must be free as well as the action, we ask whether the term free, in its application to the choice, is intended to express the same meaning as in its application to the action.

Supposing them to reply in the affirmative, we say that a

free action is a voluntary action,—an action which is the result of choice. A free choice must, accordingly, mean a voluntary choice;—a choice which results from a previous choice. But, then, according to their principles, this previous choice also must, in order to be a free choice, result from a prior choice; that again from a former one; and thus we may go backwards till we reach the first choice, which could not possibly be free in this sense, because not preceded by a previous choice. And if the first act of choice be not free, this unfortunate circumstance vitiates all the subsequent acts of choice; not one of them is a free choice, and consequently, the man is not, on their principles, a free agent.

Supposing them to reply in the negative, i. e., to affirm, that they understand the term free, in its application to the choice, in a sense different from that which it bears in its application to the action; I ask them to clear away the ambiguity, which they have never done yet, and to inform us what is the precise sense they attach to the term. A free volition, or choice, we have been told, is an unforced volition, or choice. But that, I reply, is coming back again to the sense of the words free, and forced, which is now, by hypothesis, abandoned. Perhaps they will say they mean, by a free volition or choice, an uncaused volition or choice. In that case I would answer, first, that even the action is not free in the sense of the word; it is caused, in the only intelligible sense of the term, caused by the volition, i. e., it is immediately and invariably subsequent to the volition. I would answer, secondly, that the notion of the volition being uncaused contradicts one of those first principles on which we rest our confidence of the existence of the Divine Being himself. Nothing can exist without a cause. The universe exists, therefore there is a God. But, if volition may exist without a cause, why not the universe itself? This notion, then, of free choice leads directly to Atheism. Thirdly, I answer, that it becomes the objector to show—since an action may be a free action, though it has a cause—why a volition may not be a free volition, though *it* also has a cause. I mean, of course, free in any sense which the Arminian can attach to the term; and I can conceive of two senses only—

voluntary volition, and uncaused volition. If it should be said that, though an action must have a cause, yet it may nevertheless be accounted a free action, because that cause is internal, or in the actor himself, I answer, that, on the same ground, volition may be accounted free, since the proximate cause of volition in every case is also internal; it is not the external good, held up to view by the moral Governor, but the conception which the mind forms of that good. Hence the same revelation, and of the same good too, operates differently upon different minds, because different apprehensions of it are entertained by those minds. I am utterly unable to conceive that precisely the same view of an object adapted to awaken volition should, in the case of two individuals, lead to different results. I cannot but think that there are laws of mind, as well as of matter; and that the operation of the former is as uniform and unvarying as that of the latter,—though, as we know comparatively little of the laws of mind, we are apt to think that there are no laws, or that they are very irregular in their operation. Now, if the motive (understanding by the term motive not the external good merely, but the view which the mind takes of it) do not *produce* the volition, or stand in the relation of *cause* to it;—if the mind be so constituted as that it can choose, determine, &c., and, in point of fact, does determine not only in harmony with the motive, as explained above, but in direct variance with it, then is it not manifest that there are no laws of mind,—that mind is entirely beyond Divine control?—that God has formed a being over which he possesses no power, and has no possible means of causing it to fulfil his purposes? I challenge any Arminian, any philosophical Libertarian, to show how his opinion that the motive does not cause the volition, that the mind *submits* to be influenced by it, (an expression the absurdity of which becomes apparent the very moment it is attempted to be explained,) can be reconciled with the notion of moral government. Moral government is to be understood in contradistinction from physical and instinctive government. The term indicates the nature, not the end or intention, of the government. It is not called moral government because it is adapted to promote morality, as I cannot

but think Bishop Butler has erroneously represented it,—for there might be moral government under the empire of Jehovah, if it were possible to conceive of the Governor's being a malevolent and an unholy being, (as there actually is moral government amongst the legions of fallen spirits, who are under the immediate, though subordinate, dominion of Satan,) i. e., there might be a government carried on by the influence of motives, in contradistinction both from physical force as in the world of matter, and instinctive tendencies as in the world of animals. Moral government is, in short, the sway of motives,—the dominion which God exerts over intelligent beings to secure his own ultimate purposes in their creation, though these purposes are secured, as we shall afterwards see, in different ways. Now if motives, as explained, have no influence upon the mind,—if they do not *produce* volition,—if volition arise without a cause,—God has no rule, no authority, no power over the mind. The certain influence of motives is an essential ingredient in moral government; and a man who fancies himself obliged, on account of the difficulties which appear to him to embarrass the opinion, to deny the certain influence of motives, must, to be consistent, abandon with it his belief in the existence of moral government.

I avow these opinions in the distinct and full view of the great and serious difficulties which press upon them. Now let not an opponent begin to triumph at this my confession, that the side of the keenly controverted subject which I feel compelled to take is not free from difficulty. If he should tell me that his side presents none, I should think him unworthy of being argued with. He cannot have examined the subject. He does not understand it. No candid man, competent, from native power of mind, and from a thorough and searching examination of the point in dispute, to pronounce an opinion, will venture to say that, in reference to it, there is left for us any thing more than a choice of difficulties. Am I wrong in avowing this, in reference to the opinion which I have formed? If I were writing merely for party purposes—merely to obtain a triumph over an opponent, perhaps I should be so. But the interests of truth can never be injured by the confession of a difficulty; nay, they are likely to be pro-

moted by exhibiting it in all its magnitude. The public attention is, by that course, drawn more directly and intensely towards it. More light is, consequently, likely to be thrown upon it, if it be capable of receiving elucidation; or, if not, that fact will be made more clearly apparent, and writers will more speedily cease to expend useless time and strength upon a subject which is below "the depth of their line." And are we not warranted in forming an opinion in reference to subjects which, on both sides, present great difficulties? Why, in that case, we must refrain from coming to a decision in many instances where we are constrained to decide, and to act too. What are many of our opinions but the choice we have made between difficulties? Is it not thus with the fundamental truth of all religion—the existence of God? Does not the belief of the Divine existence involve in it a violation of a first principle, viz., that nothing can exist without a cause? for the very conception of God is the conception of an uncaused Being. Yet, I am constrained to believe that there is a God, because more appalling and tremendous difficulties are necessarily involved in the contrary belief. I frankly acknowledge the difficulties which embarrass the opinion, that the motive (as explained formerly, p. 113) is the cause of the volition; yet they appear to me less than those which attach to the Libertarian and Arminian scheme. Mr. Dugald Stewart, I am constrained to admit, has put the question correctly and fairly, when he states that the turning point of the controversy between the two parties is this, viz., "What is the relation which the motive bears to the volition? Is it the cause, or merely the occasion?" Maintaining, as he does, the latter, and yet admitting that the volition must have a cause, in the true and proper sense of the word, he is obliged to search for a cause; and, denying it to be the motive, there seems to be no other possible supposition than that which he has adopted, viz., *that the man is the cause*. Now, with deference to Mr. Stewart, I venture to express the opinion that this is both an unmeaning and an incompetent solution of the difficulty.

It is *unmeaning*, since no idea can be attached to the phrase

save one which would prove that the man is the cause of all the emotions of which he is the subject. That idea is, that the man wills, determines, chooses. In this sense, he may possibly be said to *cause* the volition; but then the man loves, the man hates, fears, &c. On Mr. Stewart's principles, then, the man may be said to cause the love, the hatred, the fear, &c.; yet this Mr. S. would not admit. Now let any one attempt to attach to the words, "the man causes the volition," any other definite sense, and he will find himself, if I mistake not, greatly at a loss. Man is too complex a being to be represented intelligently as the cause of a volition. When a certain thought exists in the mind, we never think of ascribing it to man, or to the mind, as its proximate cause. We should feel, in that case, that our statement of the cause was not sufficiently definite. How can it be otherwise when man is represented as the cause of volition?

But Mr. Stewart's solution of the difficulty is also an *incompetent one*. The question, in every instance, is not merely, "How comes volition to exist in the mind?" but "How comes the particular volition of the moment to be found there?" To this question, Mr. Stewart's solution cannot afford an answer. We want to know not only why there was determination, but the particular determination to perform, or not perform, an action, for instance. Now it obviously gives us no information on that point to be told that the man determined. Suppose the question were, "Why does a particular development of the emotion of love, for example, exist in the mind at a certain time?" would it be a sufficient answer to say, the man loves? Clearly, not. I cannot regard the answer as more sufficient when it is brought forward to account for a particular development of the faculty of volition.

Again,—for as the subject is important, I must be permitted to enlarge a little further upon it,—I observe, that the views of Mr. Stewart seem to me to involve a mistake, both in reference to the nature of moral government, and of the faculty of volition. Moral government is, as we have seen, the government of motives. It effects its purposes by promising

great good as the reward of obedience, and threatening great evil as the consequence of disobedience. The subjects of moral government are so constituted as that their actions shall result from determination or volition: (not as in the brute, where they result from instinct.) There must, then, be a tendency or power in volition to lead to or to produce action, or the being would not be a capable subject of moral government. In like manner, must there not be a tendency or power in motives to produce volition? If there were not, how could the being, in this case any more than in the former, be a capable subject of moral government? We do not present motives to the brute, because they have no tendency to influence the brute. Now suppose a being were so constituted as to have the physical power of determining, or of volition, but not so as that motives should have any tendency to originate or produce volition, what practical good would result from presenting motives to him? Would a rational being ever attempt to do it? Would the being, in this case, any more than in the other, be a capable subject of moral government? It seems to me essential to the existence of moral government, both that there should be in the mind a physical power of volition, and a tendency or power in the motive to produce volition. If the latter be not the case, there is no efficiency in the government. There are, in effect, no instruments of government. The want of such tendency in the motive is, to borrow an illustration from the physical world, something like supposing a want of tendency in heat to expand bodies, and in cold to contract them; and if a similar want existed in all physical causes, then, in that case, physical government would be deprived of all its power, and the material universe would remain a lifeless, motionless mass. Mr. Stewart, though denying that the motive produces the volition, and, of course, that it has any tendency to produce it,—that it is merely the occasion on which the mind puts forth the volition, yet maintains that the mind cannot determine without motives. But why not, I ask, on his principles? If it can determine, as he thinks, in *opposition* to motives, why not *without* them? One would think it must be far more difficult to do the former, than the latter.

Is a drunkard really less able to determine to drink when there are merely no motives to tempt him to commit the sin, than when there is every motive to restrain him from it? This is surely not common sense; whether it be philosophy, I leave the reader to judge. The faculty or power of volition, as we call it, is the power of determining, as the capability of affection is the power of loving; but an actual determination cannot, any more than an actual emotion, produce itself; it cannot exist uncaused; the man, or the mind, can no more cause the one than the other; though the mind both determines and loves. There is the need of something, in the apparatus of moral government, to produce the volition; and, consequently, to deny that the motive stands in the relation of cause to the volition, is, in effect, to affirm that the volition arises without cause, and that man is altogether incapable of moral government.

There is an ambiguity in the assertion we often hear made, which, it is possible, is not apparent to many who use it. "When we determine in one way, we have, and must have, the power of determining in the other." This is doubtless true in one sense. The physical power of determining renders us physically capable of determining in any way,—as the physical power of loving renders us physically capable of loving any thing which is adapted, at least, to elicit love. But if the words be intended to intimate that motives have no such certain influence upon the mind as that the determination of any mind—in exactly the same circumstances—having the same motives presented to it—and taking precisely the same view of them—might be different from what it is, the opinion is contradicted, if we mistake not, by reason, and consciousness, and experience.

The doctrine now affirmed, that motives produce volition, is, we might add, further confirmed, were it necessary to say more, by our current phraseology, and by our constant conduct. How frequently do we hear such expressions as the following, "Such considerations *caused* me to resolve, or *produced* a determination," to do so and so. It is surely unnecessary for me to repeat that the circumstance of the mind's determining,

does not prove that the determination is not produced, (and yet I fear the language, caused ME to determine, has thus misled some;) for if that were the case, the fact that it is the mind that fears, would prove that the fear is not produced, which no one would allow. And when we seek to govern the conduct of others, do we not attempt to effect our object by presenting those motives which are likely to produce the volition, or volitions, from which the desired conduct will flow? And are there not innumerable cases in which we feel perfectly confident that the inducements we have to present will accomplish all that we desire? But how could this be the case, if motives possessed no power to produce volition?—if, in point of fact, they never did produce it?—if the mind determines arbitrarily—uninfluenced by the motive? For to say it determines to be influenced by it, or to submit to it, is either to take refuge in obscurity, or rather absurdity,—or to fall back again upon the dilemma of a voluntary volition: from which I wish, on behalf of those who are impaled upon its horns, a good deliverance!

Upon the whole, I have no hesitation in saying, that the utmost freedom which man possesses, or can possess, is liberty to act as he chooses—liberty to will as he chooses being an absurdity in thought, and a solecism in language. I have, indeed, no objection to generalize the assertion; and, as it may tend to repel a part, at least, of the objection we are now considering, I will add, that it is the only degree of liberty possessed by any intelligent being—the *great Being himself* not excepted. Jehovah, indeed, as far as I am able to judge, at least, possesses liberty in a higher degree than man; but not of an essentially different kind. Endowed with all power, he is absolutely uncontrolled; possessing within himself all happiness, his volitions cannot be produced by any thing *ab extra*. But are they self-originated, uncaused, unproduced? Do they not arise out of his immaculately holy nature, and the perfect perceptions of his intellect? Is it possible to conceive for a moment that the motives to right feeling and action have not a certain influence upon the mind of Deity? Is it to honour or to dishonour God, to declare that he has the

power of willing to do evil, in opposition to motives, which must appear to him of infinite weight, to will that which is good; but that he does not choose to exert that power,—and that herein consists his virtue? Do not our opponents show that they have formed erroneous conceptions of the nature of true virtue when they talk thus? Have we been altogether wrong in supposing that a being is virtuous in proportion to the impossibility of there arising in his mind an improper volition? If it be honourable to God to be unable to *do* what is evil, by parity of reasoning, it must be more honourable to him to be unable to *will* what is evil. And yet, a power to possess and to display wrong and improper volitions, and that in direct opposition to every inducement to right ones, would seem to be the essence of Pelagian virtue.

LECTURE VII.

ELECTION.

OBJECTION 3.—*Predestination is incompatible with the free agency and accountability of man.*

The lengthened discussions upon which we have entered, with a view to explain the nature of free agency, are of themselves so directly adapted to show that predestination does not destroy it, that I need scarcely set myself formally to repel the objection. How can it be conceived that predestination leads to this result? Does it lay any restraint or constraint upon men? Does it oblige a Christian to act virtuously and submissively, when his will is on the side of disobedience? or an ungodly man to do evil, when he is disposed to do good? If, indeed, we maintained that, in consequence of the decree of election, Jehovah puts forth an influence upon men by which they are constrained to act in opposition to their own sacred and cherished propensities,—or if our opponents could show that the putting forth of such influence is the necessary result of this decree, the doctrine of election would be effectually overturned. But it is impossible for them to do this. The decree of election is God's purpose to save the elect; or, rather, as we have explained it, his purpose to exert that holy and gracious influence upon their minds, which disposes them to seek salvation in the way in which it is to be obtained. The elect are not, consequently, compelled to go to Christ, and to enter upon his service; in the very nature of the case, this cannot be. But, in consequence of a sanctifying energy reaching their hearts, or nature, the radical source of disposition, they joyfully go to the Saviour, and cheerfully surrender their affections to him, who is now discovered to be altogether lovely. Thus, predestination does not destroy the free agency

of the saved. And what is its effect, in this point of view, upon the finally lost? Does it deprive them of freedom? This, on the principles previously stated, must be seen to be altogether impossible, since they are not included in its decree. They are not elected to be saved; and there is no election, properly speaking, to damnation.

It is, then, manifest that those who finally perish are not more affected by the decree of election than the fallen angels; and it has never yet, I believe, been pretended that predestination deprives the latter of free agency.

As there are Calvinists, however, who imagine that a decree to save some of the race necessarily implies a decree not to save, or to pass by others, I would not dismiss this branch of the subject without attempting to show that even the views they entertain, though I do not regard them as either rational or scriptural, are by no means fatal to the admission of the free agency of man. For, supposing a decree to pass by the non-elect had existed, would it have placed them in a position different from that in which they would have stood, had it been the determination of Jehovah to pass the whole race by—or, in other words, not to magnify his grace in the salvation of any? Conceive for a moment that such had been the mournful, though, as it must be admitted, equitable (or the plan of mercy would have been a plan of justice) determination of God, would that have affected the free agency of man? Would it have subjected him to the involuntary practice of sin? Would it have rendered his disobedience certain and necessary, in spite of his efforts to prevent it? Would it not rather have conveyed to us the assurance that he would *make* no such efforts? For a determination to exert no influence to save a race of fallen and sinful beings, is a determination to leave them to follow out the devices of their own hearts,—to act, in short, as they choose. How such a determination, even if it existed, could destroy free agency, though, in point of fact, they might choose to do evil, it is impossible to conceive. It is leaving them to their free agency, not overturning it. On the admission, then, that predestination did include a decree to pass by the finally lost, it would be impossible for Arminians to maintain that it

destroys free agency ; unless they are prepared to prove that it would have been undermined by a determination, on the part of God, to abandon the whole race of man, as he has done the whole race of fallen angels, to the consequences of rebellion.

I now proceed to consider the influence of the doctrine of predestination upon the accountability of man. It destroys, we are told, his accountability. Our reply to this objection also must of necessity be modified by the views we form of the doctrine itself. If predestination be not the appointment of any to eternal misery,—if it do not even include a decree to pass the non-elect by,—if the subjects of the electing decree be the finally saved, and the finally saved alone,—there is manifestly no ground for the charge that predestination overthrows the accountability of the finally lost. If their accountability were destroyed, it must have been overturned by something else—by the fall, for instance. But that event must not be ascribed to predestination, since the electing decree presupposes, as we have seen, the fallen state of man, and is, in fact, a purpose to deliver certain individuals from that state. Nor does predestination destroy the accountability, or the moral worth and virtue, of those who are included within its range ; since, in the accomplishment of its purpose, it merely operates upon disposition, the source of moral conduct. It secures the existence of a right principle of action ; but, in estimating the character of moral actions, we pronounce them excellent, or the contrary, according to the principle or the motive from which they spring, without inquiring into the origin of the principle itself. The conduct of Christians is morally excellent, because it flows from a good principle, though that good principle itself is the fruit of predestination ; as the conduct of God is morally excellent, because it flows from right principles, though he possesses right principles by necessity of nature.

And, even if predestination included a decree to pass by the finally lost, it would not, even in that case, touch the accountability of man. A determination to do nothing in relation to them—to exert no influence, of any kind, upon them—to

leave them to the unrestrained influence of those evil passions of which it regarded them as the subjects when it was passed ; would manifestly leave them subject to the measure of accountability in possession of which it found them. Other circumstances, indeed, might possibly divest some of their accountability ; but it is idle to suppose that the Divine decree, thus understood, could take it away.

It may possibly be objected here, though I scarcely know from what camp the objection would emanate, that God is said in the sacred volume to have decreed certain evil actions ; and that, consequently, he must, in conformity with the axiom, " He does what he decrees," originate, or cause, or produce those actions : and, generalizing the assertion, that he must originate all those actions which are the subjects of decree ; i. e., as some suppose, all the actions of the entire family of man. Now it must not be forgotten that the preceding pages have not represented even the holy actions of the people of God as being directly decreed. In that case I think it would follow that God performs the actions, or that they are the actions of God and not of man.

Mr. Watson, indeed, endeavours to fix upon Calvinism the absurd notion that it is God who repents, believes, loves, &c. ; and it is very possible that some Calvinists have not formed very distinct notions on this point ;—that they may have conceived of faith, hope, love, &c., in their exercise, i. e., the act of believing, loving, &c., as having been originated in the mind by a direct act of Divine power and grace. In this case there would certainly be more foundation for the condemnatory statements of Mr. Watson. But it is imagined that no Calvinist, who has thought closely and maturely on the subject, conceives of any thing more than that a special and direct influence of the Holy Spirit is exerted upon the mind ; and that, as the immediate *result* of this influence, the evidence and glory of Divine truth are discerned,—from which discernment the faith and love of the truth flow by natural consequence, and according to the ordinary laws of mind.* The thing

* Vide Lectures on Regeneration.

directly decreed, even in reference to good actions, is only that an influence shall be put forth which will certainly lead to their performance.

But, then, since evil actions are said to be decreed, it is objected, that an influence here, as in the case of good actions, must be exerted to secure their performance; and that, consequently, God is the author of sin. To meet this objection, it will be necessary to ascertain in what precise sense and manner evil actions are decreed; for that some at least (though several of the passages brought forward in proof of this have been misunderstood) are said to have been the subjects of decree, will scarcely admit of doubt. Let us take the crucifixion of our Lord as an instance which may enable us to develop the great principle. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts iv. 27, 28.)

This is a case, as it is said, in which sinful actions are spoken of as the consequence of a Divine decree. Now I do not avail myself of a different collocation of the words, proposed by some eminent scholars, which would bring out the sentiment, not that Herod and Pontius Pilate, &c., were gathered together to do what the counsel of the Lord had determined, but that Christ was anointed to accomplish all this. I do not avail myself of this, both because it is unnecessary to resort to this altered collocation of the words, and because there can be no doubt that the salvation of men by the crucifixion of the Son of God, was a divinely appointed event. But, I ask, what is the precise concern which the purpose of God had with the horrible crime of crucifying the Lord of glory? Is there any necessity to suppose—is it even possible to suppose—that Jehovah determined that event in the same sense and manner in which he determined that the primitive believers should receive the Saviour? I answer, decidedly no. In this case the Divine decree extended to the giving up of the Saviour into the hands of his enemies, but not to the treatment which, when thus given up, he received from them. Known

unto God are all his works, and all the power, the thoughts, the feelings of men, from eternity. He knew the precise state of mind of Herod and Pontius Pilate, &c. He knew the precise amount of enmity against his character and government of which they were the subjects, and which they ultimately displayed; and he perceived, with unerring prescience, the precise manner in which that enmity, unless restrained by Divine power, would display itself at all times, and in all possible combinations of circumstances. Possessed of this most perfect knowledge, he foresaw that, if his Son should appear in this world in the fulness of time, and should be given up to the malice of these individuals, he would be called to suffer the precise measure of shame, and pain, and woe, which, in point of fact, he afterwards endured. And yet, knowing all this, he *sent* his Son into the world,—he *determined* to send his Son into the world,—*determined* to surrender him to the malice of his enemies. He perceived that the voluntary manifestations of the ungodly passions of men might be rendered subservient to the accomplishment of his own most glorious purposes; and, therefore, though he did not determine that men should thus display their ungodly passions, he did determine to expose his Son to their operation. Though he did not decree that Herod and Pontius Pilate, &c., should bind, and bruise, and crucify the Saviour, he did decree that the Saviour should be given up to their cruelty and vengeance. His decree, in short, extended to what he did in this transaction, but not to what men did. There was need for a decree that the Redeemer should be surrendered into the hands of his enemies, but not that he should be treated as he was treated when brought within their power. A decree that Herod and Pontius Pilate should crucify him, or be permitted to crucify him, is clearly inadmissible; if, for no other reason, because it was perfectly unnecessary—the event being certain, without a decree to prevent it. It is like supposing a decree to permit the pestilence to injure when it strikes us. In conformity, indeed, with Scripture style, in which God is said to do what, he foresees, from the depravity of men, and the circumstances in which they are placed, will be done if he

does not prevent it, Herod and Pontius Pilate, &c., may be said to have done what God determined before to be done ; and thus we may retain the ordinary collocation of the words in the passage we are now considering. But, in strict accuracy of thought, the decree of God extended no farther than to the giving up of his Son to the malice and power of his enemies. And such, I apprehend, is the amount of concern which the Divine decrees have with sinful actions in general. Jehovah perceives how that principle, which is the prolific source of all evil, will develop itself, in every conceivable variety of circumstances. And, it is perfectly easy for him so to arrange his providential dispensations, as that the ungodly passions of men shall prove the instruments of accomplishing his merciful purposes, without decreeing that these men shall be the subjects of this depravity, or that their unholy passions shall develop themselves in that particular manner ; or, I add, without decreeing to permit the one or the other. All that God does in the business is the subject of decree ; all that man does is not the subject of decree.

It may not be irrelevant here to introduce a few remarks in reference to the part which Divine agency performs in the ordinary actions of men. In God, it is said, "we live, and move, and have our being." In every bodily action Divine agency must, consequently, be put forth. It is by power derived from God that the muscles so act as to extend the arm, in obedience to volition, whether the arm be put forth to save or to destroy,—to perform an act of obedience, or of sin. But, in that case, is not God the author of sin ? That, I reply, does not by any means follow. It is necessary to accountability—to free agency—that we should possess physical power to do what we resolve to do ; and consequently, it is a law of Divine Providence that such power should be given, and sustained. The power to move the limbs in obedience to volition is, accordingly, supported by God, of whatever nature that volition may be. It is like an instrument intrusted to our care by Jehovah. It may be used properly, or criminally ; but we only are responsible for the manner in which we use it. The wealth which men enjoy was originally the gift of God ; it is

preserved to them by his power and goodness; yet who ever thinks of regarding God as the author of sin, because it is too frequently spent in the gratification of unholy desires?

And may we not apply the same principles to volition itself? Was not that given originally, and is it not perpetually sustained, by God? Every consistent theist will acknowledge this. When motives are presented to the mind, and operate upon the mind, must not their influence upon it be ascribed to the fact, that the mind is possessed of a power, or faculty, which we denominate will, or volition, and which is sustained by the conserving hand of Divine Providence? Were volition to become extinct, in the case of any man, motives would be addressed to him in vain; and he would cease to be a subject of moral government. It is, accordingly, a law of Divine Providence that, when the performance of a certain action, for instance, appears desirable to an individual, the power to determine upon its performance should be continued to that individual. The abstract power to will, and to act, is in all cases from God; the obliquity of the volition and of the action, whenever they are sinful, results from the depravity of the heart; but that depravity had not its source in Divine appointment and influence.

Still it will be objected that, since the motive produces the volition, no man can be responsible for his volitions. Now, without pretending that it is a full and sufficient answer to the objection, might it not be replied, that, since the conceived excellence of an object *produces* the love we feel towards it, we are not, if this objection be valid, responsible for the love? And, if it should be said, that, in all cases in which we love improperly, immorally, we might have avoided experiencing the feeling by gaining that juster view of the object which Divine revelation has furnished us with the means of obtaining,—it would be easy to retort that we might have come to a different determination, where volition has been sinful, if we had duly considered the motives which are adapted to originate a right and holy volition. It is difficult to see what difference there is in these two cases. But how can it be just to punish a man who determines improperly, if the volition were not a

voluntary one, (the reader must remember, here, the absurdity which is involved in the supposition of a *voluntary* volition, vide p. 112, or he cannot do justice, either to the objection or the reply,) if the motive *caused* the volition? The only, and, as I venture to think, the obvious philosophical reply to this objection is, that he must be punished to secure a right volition in future; since this is the only way of securing that object. I would warn my readers, who, not accepting this solution, may be disposed yet further to press the difficulty, to beware how they proceed; for the objection goes deeper than perhaps they imagine. It lies not merely against the propriety of punishment under moral government, but against moral government itself. I feel some surprise that this should have been overlooked by most, if not by all, preceding writers. Moral government is, as we have seen, the government of motives. And what are motives? What can they be but happiness and misery? happiness as the result of obedient and holy conduct; misery as the consequence of rebellion? Rewards and punishments are the only means which *moral government* either does or can employ, to secure compliance with the will of the governor. What then is it to affirm, that, where sin has been committed, the punishment must not be inflicted because the motive produced the volition? Is it not manifestly to say that Jehovah must throw away the very means of government? Yea, that he must discontinue this mode of government altogether? For the non-execution of threatenings is the destruction of moral government.

A plain Christian man, not disposed to indulge in philosophical reasonings—perhaps not prepared for them—will probably satisfy himself with such reflections as the following: God has given to men a law which is holy, just, and good—which they feel and acknowledge to be so; he has bestowed upon them sufficient power to obey that law, for all the law is fulfilled in one word,—love; and he has formed them capable of experiencing the emotion of love, while his own character is most powerfully adapted to awaken it, and would awaken it were it duly considered; he sets life and death before them as the consequences of obedience and rebellion; he urges them

by the strongest motives to embrace the one, and to refuse the other; but he leaves them free to act as they choose. If they choose death, that is their fault. They do it with their eyes open; God expostulating, and warning, and entreating, and commanding them, to flee from the wrath to come. How then can they expect him—what right have they to require him—to deprive them of that fruit, though it be everlasting destruction, which they have deliberately chosen?

OBJECTION 4th.—*Predestination is incompatible with those exhortations to perseverance, and those declarations of the necessity of perseverance, which are contained in the Scriptures.*

I believe the following statement will be found to comprehend the substance and force of the objection. If a man be elected to eternal life, he is as certain of its ultimate enjoyment as though he had it in possession. Does it not, then, tend to delude and deceive him, to intimate the possibility of his falling short of it? Or, to take the other side of the objection: cautions against apostasy are actually addressed, by the sacred writers, to societies of Christians, and more especially to individual Christians; does not this fact prove that their perseverance and final salvation were not secured by a Divine decree? "Give diligence," says Peter, "to make your calling and election sure." "The salvation of these elect, of this chosen generation, was, therefore," says the Bishop of Lincoln, "so far from being certain, that it depended upon their diligence; their not falling was so far from being infallibly decreed, that it depended upon their doing those things that the apostle commanded."

Now, before we attempt to point out the *πρωτον πσενδος* of this reasoning, it may be expedient to test its validity by a case, in which we know that the preservation of certain individuals was decreed, and promised; but in which they were commanded to do certain things which are stated to be necessary to secure it. And precisely such a case, if I mistake not, is recorded in the 27th chapter of Acts. It is the account of Paul's voyage to Rome. The heavens, we are informed, during their course, gathered blackness. The light of day, and even the feeble lights of night, were entirely obscured; for

neither sun nor stars for many days appeared. The tempestuous Euroclydon continued beating upon the vessel; and, in regard to their preservation, the last gleam of hope had disappeared. In these appalling circumstances, the apostle stood up in the midst of them, and said, "Sirs, be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship." Here, then, is a case in which the preservation of certain men was secured by an infallible decree; for Paul had derived the assurance which he conveyed to them from an angel of the Lord. And yet he immediately after declared, that, unless the sailors, who were about to abandon the ship, and leave the passengers to their fate, tarried in it, they could not be saved. Their skill and exertions were necessary to the management of the vessel; deprived of them, all must consequently perish. According, then, to the Bishop of Lincoln's mode of reasoning, the preservation of these men could not have been determined upon by God. The very words he employs may be used here: "Their deliverance was so far from being certain, that it depended upon their own diligence. Their not sinking was so far from being infallibly decreed, that it depended upon their doing those things which the apostle commanded." We know, however, from apostolic testimony, on the one hand, that their deliverance was absolutely certain; and on the other, that it depended upon means—upon their own exertions. There is no inconsistency, then, between the certainty of a temporal salvation, and a necessity for the use of means. Now, if exhortations to exertions, to secure a temporal deliverance, fail to prove that that deliverance is not rendered certain by an infallible decree, it most manifestly follows that the admonitions of Peter, to which we have referred, must also fail to prove, that the "not falling" of the strangers of the dispersion was not rendered certain by a Divine decree.

The preceding statements clearly prove that the argument of the Bishop of Lincoln is fallacious, but they do not show wherein its fallacy consists. I pass on, therefore, to observe that its radical defect is here. It assumes that, where the end is decreed, there are no means also decreed by which the end

is to be secured. The argument of the Bishop is in reality as follows. If means are necessary, the end must be uncertain : or, conversely, if the end is certain, then means are unnecessary. But if it be the case, that God invariably works by means, or effects his purposes through their influence, it follows, necessarily, that where the end is decreed, the means also are decreed ; and, conversely, that where the means for securing a certain end are not employed, the end will not be attained ;—not because the purposes of God can be frustrated, but because we may be sure that, in this case, it was not his purpose that that end should be attained. The correctness of these statements is so very apparent, and capable of such varied illustration, that one feels it to be a tax upon one's time, and patience too, to be called even to notice objections so utterly and manifestly fallacious. Let us take a very familiar illustration :—" God has determined how long the child before us shall live, for the number of his months is with him. He will live to the appointed period, and not live a moment beyond it. Suppose that period be threescore years and ten." This, then, is the end decreed. But, to secure this end, the individual must take food, when in health, and medicine when deprived of it ; and, I may add, they will be taken ; for the decree of God renders the means as certain as the end. If, in the case of another individual, these means of health and of life were steadily rejected, we should feel confident that he must die ; and equally confident that it had not been decreed that he should live. I cannot refrain from laying before the reader the following beautiful illustration of this point, by an eloquent living writer :—" God might carry every one purpose of his into immediate accomplishment by the direct energy of his own hands. But, in point of fact, this is not his general way of proceeding. He chooses rather to arrive at the accomplishment of many of his objects by a succession of steps, and by the concurrence of one or more visible instruments, which require time for their operation. This is a truth to which all nature and all experience lend their testimony. It was his purpose that, at the moment I am now addressing you, there should be light over the face of the country, and

this purpose he accomplishes by the instrumentality of the sun. There is a time coming, when light shall be furnished out to us in another way—when there shall be no need either of the sun or the moon to lighten the city of our habitation—but where the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof. But this is not the way at present; and, therefore, it is both true that it was God's purpose there should be light over us and around us at this moment, and that unless the sun had risen upon us this morning, there would have been no such light. It may be the purpose of God to bless the succeeding year with a plentiful harvest. He could accomplish this purpose in two ways. He could make the ripened corn start into existence by a single word of his power. But this is not the actual way in which he carries such designs into accomplishment. He does it by the co-operation of many visible instruments. It is true, he can pour abundance among us, even in the midst of adverse weather and unfavourable seasons. But he actually does it by means of favourable weather, and favourable seasons. It is not in spite of bad weather that we receive from his hands the blessings of plenty—but in consequence of good weather—sunshine and shower succeeding each other in fit proportion—calm to prevent the shaking of the corn, and wind in sufficient quantity to winnow it, and make a prosperous in-gathering. Should it be the purpose of God to give to us a plentiful harvest next year, it will certainly happen; and yet it may be no less true, that unless such weather come, we shall have no plentiful harvest. God, who appoints the end, orders and presides over the whole series of means which lead to it." To apply this admirable illustration to the case before us, eternal life, it may be observed, is the end to which God has appointed his people; faith and perseverance are the means which lead to it. It follows, therefore, on the principles stated above, that, unless we endure unto the end, we cannot be saved. And, since this is the case, it is highly proper, and indeed necessary, to declare this publicly. It would be so, indeed, if we knew as certainly who were ordained to eternal life, as Paul knew it was the purpose of God that no life should be lost in the

voyage of which we have been speaking. "Even though such knowledge were imparted to us, still it would be our part to say to those of whose final salvation we were assured, 'Believe the gospel, or you shall not be saved; purify yourselves, even as God is pure, or you shall not be saved.' But we are not in possession of the secret: and how much more, then, does it lie upon us to ply with earnestness the fears and the consciences of our hearers by these revealed things which God has been pleased to make known to us. What! if Paul, though assured by an angel from heaven of the final deliverance of his ship's company, still persists in telling them that, if they leave certain things undone, their deliverance will be impossible—shall we, utterly in the dark about the final state of a single hearer we are addressing, let down for a single instant the practical urgency of the New Testament? The predestination of God respecting the final escape of Paul and his companions from shipwreck, though made known to the apostle, did not betray him into the indolence which is ascribed, and falsely ascribed, to the belief of this doctrine; nor did it restrain him from spiriting on the people to the most strenuous and fatiguing exertions. And shall we, who only know in general that God does predestinate, but cannot carry it home with assurance to a single individual, convert this doctrine into a plea of indolence and security? Even should we see the mark of God upon their foreheads, it would be our duty to labour them with the necessity of doing those things which, if left undone, will exclude from the kingdom of God. But we make no such pretensions. We see no such mark upon any of your foreheads. We possess no more than the Bible, and access, through the Mediator, to Him who by his Spirit can open our understandings to understand it. The revealed things which we find there belong to us, and we press them upon you. 'Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' 'If ye believe not on the Son of God, the wrath of God abideth on you.' 'He that endureth unto the end,' and he only, 'shall be saved.'"

To this eloquent statement I will only add, that, as faith and perseverance are the means of salvation, so exhortations to

continue in the faith are the means of perseverance. God keeps his people *in the faith* by means, as well as brings them to *final salvation* by means. And those exhortations to diligence and watchfulness,—those solemn admonitions against apostasy,—those earnest and pressing calls to prayer, and labour, and perseverance, which the Scriptures address to them,—constitute the means, in part at least, by the influence of which their will and affections are retained on the side of God, until he shall come and take them to the eternal enjoyment of himself.

LECTURE VIII.

THE ATONEMENT.

THE general office of Mediator, assumed by our Lord, imposed on him the necessity of doing all that was required to repair the broken bonds of amity between God and man. To effect this much was needed to be done on both sides; for God was at variance with man, and man was an enemy to God. "The priesthood of Christ" is a comprehensive phrase, descriptive of all that was done by him in reference to God himself, with a view to the healing of the breach. It comprehends the sacrifice which he presented to God on earth, and the intercession which he carries on within the veil. The term atonement designates the first of these great branches of the sacerdotal office. The following pages will treat of the *nature*, the *necessity*, the *manner*, the *reality*, the *efficacy*, and the *extent* of the atonement.

I.—THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.

The inquiry on which we enter here refers exclusively to the precise idea which the Scriptures lead us to attach to the statement, that atonement for sin was made by the Son of God.

A very ingenious writer gives the following explanation of the word atonement. "Moses," says he, "saw two Hebrews striving together, and endeavoured to reconcile them. Had he succeeded, he would have produced a-one-ment. He would have made them at-one-ment. In plain English, he would

have made them friends again." That this is the primary meaning and force of the term there can be little doubt. The phrase, "to make atonement," meant originally to reconcile two parties at variance. It did not contain any reference to the means by which the reconciliation was effected. Yet as, in every case of variance, some means must be resorted to by the mediator to repair the broken bonds of amity, the word atonement would easily acquire a secondary signification; and the phrase, "to make atonement," would come to be understood as indicative of the employment of those means which were required by the nature of the case to effect the reconciliation at which the mediator aimed. Hence, when we speak of the atonement of Christ, we do not merely intend to denote the reconciliation which he effected between God and man; but to express the means, also, by which it was accomplished. We design, in short, to state, "that he has made peace by the blood of his cross."

The atonement may, then, be defined as that satisfaction for sin which was rendered to God, as the moral Governor of the world, by the perfect obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ;—a satisfaction which has removed every obstacle, resulting from the Divine perfections and government, to the bestowment of mercy upon the guilty in any method which Divine wisdom may see fit to adopt. This definition is sufficiently comprehensive, it is presumed, to include all that is essential to the atonement, and to guard against certain false conceptions which have been formed of its nature. It exhibits especially the three following particulars, each of which it is necessary to keep distinctly in view, if we would entertain enlightened and correct conceptions of this essential article of the Christian faith;—the character in which Jehovah requires and receives the atonement,—the nature of the satisfaction which it rendered to him,—and the ground on which pardon flows to those who repent and believe the gospel on account of it; or the connexion which exists between it, and the forgiveness of sin.

First, the character in which Jehovah requires and receives the atonement, demands our notice. It might have been sup-

posed, indeed, that there could be no need to consume, on this part of the subject, a single moment of time; for since sin—for which the death of Christ was an atonement—is the transgression of the law, and since a law necessarily supposes a lawgiver, few things can be more manifest than that *satisfaction for sin must have been rendered to God in his public character, or as the moral Governor of the world.* The conduct of our opponents has, however, rendered it necessary to direct the particular attention of the reader to the point we are about to consider. Who, that has merely glanced into the productions of Unitarian writers, has not observed how they have attempted to excite prejudice against the doctrine of the atonement, not by arguing against it, or not merely by arguing against it, but by misrepresenting its nature? Who is unaware of their efforts to fix upon the God of the Calvinists, as they sneeringly call him, the charge of insensibility, of sternness, and inflexibility,—and of their disingenuous and most unfair attempts to place, in the light of disadvantageous contrast, the conduct of Jehovah in requiring an atonement, and refusing to be satisfied without it, with the conduct of a meek, and benevolent, and placable man, whose anger never outlives the acknowledgments of the offender, and sometimes even expires before they are made? At no very distant period, one of their main writers was disingenuous enough to affirm, after our reiterated explanations, that the doctrine of atonement “distorts the character of God, and represents the Father of mercies as a being whom it is impossible to love.”

Now I maintain, that the very existence of this charge results from the forgetfulness or the denial of the important fact, that satisfaction for sin was required by God, and rendered to him, not in the relation which a private individual sustains to his friends and neighbours, but in that in which a moral Governor stands to his subjects, who must support the credit and authority of the law, and who could not possibly do either, were he to suffer it to be broken with impunity. For when was almost every epithet of abuse lavished against an earthly judge, for not suffering (what he is forbidden by his office to do) the manifestly guilty to escape? When was such

a judge stigmatized, even by an Unitarian, as a stern, inflexible, implacable being—a being whom it is impossible to love,—because he officially pronounces an individual a transgressor, after he has been clearly proved to be such, and passes upon him the sentence which the law attaches to his crime? We may confidently reply, Never. To act in this manner is so obviously virtue in a judge, that no doubt has ever been entertained, or can be entertained, on the subject. A judge must be inflexible. It is his highest honour to be so. To exercise mercy—if by that word be meant the extension of pardon to a transgressor, on the ground of his penitence and promises of amendment—is beyond his province. He cannot do it without injustice; for equity in a judge is the unbending application of the general principles and decisions of the law to the particular case in hand. A righteous decision is the law speaking by the mouth of the judge; and the law does not more award pardon to the guilty, than punishment to the innocent.

It is only by dexterously drawing a veil over the relation which God sustains to man as moral Governor—by diverting general attention from the important distinction which exists between the private and the public character of God, that our opponents can hope to succeed in their attempts to prove that the doctrine of atonement throws a stigma upon the Divine Being. This is accordingly done by them. They talk of the great *Parent* of mankind—the *universal Father*, &c.; but in connexion with their statements, in reference to the atonement at least, they do not represent him as their present ruler, and their future judge. They exhibit him to the view of their readers as if he sustained the relation to them which a *private* individual bears to those who reside in his vicinity; and then, because no private member of civil society is bound to seek satisfaction for an injury which affects him exclusively, even when the transgressor is *not* penitent, and a *fortiori* when he *is* so; because, as I am not unwilling to add, it then becomes his duty to forgive him, and to refuse forgiveness would blemish his character,—they argue that the doctrine of atonement, which practically declares that Jehovah does not, and cannot

do this, represents him as a monster whom the world should join to despise and abhor.

It is, then, in the relation which God bears to men as their moral Governor and Judge—a relation necessarily sustained by him—that he requires and receives satisfaction for sin.

Let it be further observed, that atonement is not only rendered to God as a public character, *but as displeased, in that character, with the conduct of men.* The requisition of atonement so obviously implies, indeed, that ground of offence had been given by that conduct, and had been actually taken by the moral Governor, that I should not have introduced the statement, but for the opportunity which it affords to explain the precise nature of that displeasure against sin which we thus attribute to God. This explanation is rendered necessary by the prevalence of mistakes in reference to the subject, and by the obscurity which hangs over the conceptions of many, who are otherwise evangelical in their views in regard to the great subject of the atonement itself.

Bearing in mind the general statements already made, we shall be preserved from the error, that the Divine displeasure against sin is akin to that excitement and perturbation of mind, by which we are frequently agitated when treated with manifest injustice or cruelty. There will be no need to guard the intelligent reader against the obvious and gross mistake, of concluding that any state of the Eternal Mind, must exactly resemble a certain state of a created mind, because it bears the same name. He will instantly perceive that there must be a difference of some kind, though it may not be an easy matter to state precisely wherein that difference consists,—a difference corresponding with that which exists between the nature of God, and the nature of man.

“The anger of God,” says one of the most justly popular writers and preachers of the present day, “is not a passion, but a principle.” “It is the opposition and aversion of his nature,” we are again told, “to every kind and degree of moral evil.” Both of these statements are true, in one sense, yet they do not shed so much light over the subject as it is desirable to possess, if it can be obtained. Let it then be

most carefully recollected, that by the anger of God we mean the displeasure which in his public character he bears, and must manifest, against sin. It is, in short, the necessity which is imposed upon him, by the relation in which he stands to men as their moral Governor, to inflict upon the disobedient the sentence of his law; a sentence which exhibits the personal hatred with which, as an infinitely holy Being, he must regard sin;—for doubtless there is an irreconcilable aversion in the Divine nature to every species and degree of moral evil, and to such a nature the unholy tempers and the abandoned conduct of the wicked must be unspeakably abominable:—but when we speak of the anger which sinners aroused against themselves by transgression, and which was removed by the atonement of Christ, we do not refer to this necessary aversion of the Divine nature to sin; though this important distinction is greatly too much overlooked. For, in *the first place*, had there existed no obstacle to the salvation of men, but what we have ventured to call Jehovah's personal hatred of sin, it is not easy to see what need there would have been of an atonement. That power which rendered Adam a perfect man, in a moral point of view, could have easily converted a world of sinners into a world of saints, and then the anger to which we now refer must have sunk of itself. And, *secondly*, the atonement, producing directly no moral change upon the characters of men, cannot have destroyed the necessary aversion of the Divine nature to sin and sinners; and hence we are assured, that "God is angry with the wicked every day." Yet peace was made by the blood of the cross. God was reconciled to the world by the death of his Son; reconciled even to those whose hearts are enmity against him; for the intelligence of this reconciliation is, by Divine appointment, to be proclaimed to mankind, that it may win back again their alienated affections, and convert a world of rebels into a world of friends. "God was in Christ," says the apostle, "reconciling the world unto himself,"—"and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation;" "we pray the *world*," (therefore,) "be ye reconciled to God."*

* 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

The anger of God, then, which was actually removed by the death of his Son, was neither that effervescence of feeling which, in the case of man, has appropriated to itself the name; nor that disapprobation with which the holy mind of God must have contemplated a race of rebellious and depraved beings,—a disapprobation which could only have been removed by a radical change of character in those beings: but it was the impediment—an impediment which nothing else could have taken away,—presented by his office as moral Governor, to the bestowment of pardon upon them. In other words, it was that judicial and absolute necessity, under which he had been previously placed, to inflict the punishment of the law upon all who had broken it, while he might feel the tenderest commiseration for the fate of the transgressors themselves.

Secondly, we proceed to notice the nature of that satisfaction which was rendered to God as the moral Governor of the world. As we proceed, it will be found that the various parts of this great subject illustrate each other. The statements concerning the necessity of the atonement, for instance, partially explain its nature; an exhibition of its nature proves, on the other hand, its necessity. In like manner, the nature of that satisfaction which it is now proposed to investigate, must have received some elucidation from the account just given of the displeasure, on the part of God, which rendered the satisfaction necessary. The correctness of this statement will more fully appear in the course of the following remarks.

The previous definition of the atonement exhibits it in the light of a *moral satisfaction*. It was stated to be a satisfaction for *sin*, rendered to God as the moral Governor of the world. Now a moral satisfaction is one entirely *sui generis*. We must be especially cautious not to identify it in our conceptions with a pecuniary satisfaction. The common and popular phraseology on this subject exposes us to the danger of doing this. Sin is frequently described as a debt, and the atonement as the payment of this debt; and, if we were careful to recollect that these are symbolical or figurative terms, we should not be misled by the phraseology. But the misfortune is, that words which are really figurative, and which are em-

employed for the sole purpose of illustration, have been understood and explained literally. Sin has been represented as a real debt, and the atonement as a real payment of that debt; and the unhappy result is, that darkness of the densest kind has been made to envelop the whole subject. There are individuals who imagine that Christ rescues his people from the claims of Divine justice in precisely the same way in which a generous friend delivers a debtor from captivity, by advancing the necessary sum on his behalf. Now I would not affirm that it is impossible for such persons to be saved by an humble hope in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ; but I can have no hesitation in expressing the opinion, that they do not understand the atonement. A pecuniary satisfaction, and a moral satisfaction, differ essentially in their nature, and proceed on radically different principles. Perhaps no man has set this difference in a clearer light than the late Mr. Fuller, whose words I quote:—"I apprehend," says this excellent writer, "that very important mistakes have arisen from considering the interposition of Christ under the notion of paying a debt. The blood of Christ is, indeed, the price of our redemption, or that for the sake of which we are delivered from the curse of the law; but this metaphorical language, as well as that of head and members, may be carried too far, and may lead us into many errors. In cases of debt and credit among men, when a surety undertakes to represent the debtor, from the moment his undertaking is accepted, the debtor is free, and may obtain his liberty, not as a matter of favour, at least on the part of the creditor, but of strict justice." "But who in his sober senses will imagine this to be analogous to the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ? Sin is a debt only in a metaphorical sense; properly speaking, it is a crime, and satisfaction for it requires to be made, not on pecuniary, but on moral principles. If Philemon had accepted of that part of Paul's offer which respected property, and had placed so much of it to his account as he considered Onesimus to have owed him, he could not have been said to have remitted his debt, nor would Onesimus have had to thank him for remitting it. But it is supposed of Onesimus, that he might not only

be in debt to his master, but have wronged him. Perhaps he had embezzled his goods, corrupted his children, or injured his character. Now for Philemon to accept that part of the offer were very different from the other. In the one case, he would have accepted of a pecuniary representative; in the other, of a moral one; i. e., of a mediator. The satisfaction, in the one case, would annihilate the very idea of remission; but not in the other. Whatever satisfaction Paul might give to Philemon respecting the wound inflicted upon his character and honour, as the head of a family, it would not supersede the necessity of pardon being sought by the offender, and freely bestowed by the offended.

“The reason of this difference is easily perceived. Debts are transferable, but crimes are not. A third person may cancel the one, but he can only obliterate the effects of the other; the desert of the criminal remains. The debtor is accountable to his creditor as a private individual, who has power to accept of a surety; or, if he please, to remit the whole without any satisfaction. In the one case, he would be just; in the other, merciful; but no place is afforded by either of them for the combination of justice and mercy in the same proceeding. The criminal, on the other hand, is amenable to the magistrate, or to the head of a family, as a public person; and who, especially if the offence be capital, cannot remit the punishment without invading law and justice; nor, in the ordinary discharge of his office, admit of a third person to stand in his place. In extraordinary cases, however, extraordinary expedients are resorted to. A satisfaction may be made to law and justice, as to the spirit of them, while the letter is dispensed with. The well-known story of Zaleuchus, the Grecian law-giver, who consented to lose one of his own eyes, to save one of his son's eyes—who, by transgressing the law, had subjected himself to the loss of both—is an example. Here, as far as it went, justice and mercy were combined in the same act; and had the satisfaction been much fuller than it was—so full that the authority of the law, instead of being weakened, should have been abundantly magnified and honoured, still it had been perfectly consistent with free forgiveness. Finally, in

the case of the debtor, satisfaction being once accepted, justice requires his complete discharge ; but, in that of the criminal, where satisfaction is made to the wounded honour of the law, and the authority of the lawgiver, justice, though it admits of his discharge, yet no otherwise requires it, than as it may have been matter of promise to the substitute."*

The preceding statements prove that a broad line of distinction exists between a moral and a pecuniary satisfaction. They exhibit very clearly the nature of the latter kind of satisfaction ; and show that the satisfaction of Christ cannot have been of this description. The amount of the statements may be thus shortly given. A pecuniary representative cannot be refused—a pecuniary satisfaction is made to an individual in his private character—it precludes the possibility of forgiveness—and, consequently, gives the individual represented a right to demand his discharge. What sober-minded man, to adopt Mr. Fuller's language, will venture to say that any of these notions accord with the Scripture representations of the substitution and satisfaction of Christ ? The passing remark of Fuller, that, if sin were literally a debt, it might have been remitted by God without any satisfaction, is especially worthy of attention. Such a representation of sin does most certainly destroy the necessity of atonement altogether ! For what is there to forbid the most honourable and upright judge in the world to remit any personal debts which an individual may have contracted with him ? In no degree would his character, as a lover of integrity and moral virtue in general, be compromised thereby ; because a man may always forego his own private rights if he chooses so to do : or, if he be restrained on the ground that his family and friends would suffer were he to forego them, he ceases to act as an individual. The rights which he struggles to retain are no longer his own personal rights. He acts as a public character ; and his conduct is governed by the principles which regulate moral government in general.

I do not think, however, that Mr. Fuller has very distinctly explained the nature of a moral satisfaction. It is implied,

* Fuller's Works, vol. iv. pp. 101—4.

perhaps, in the statements he gives us; but the language he employs fails to convey any distinct conceptions to the mind of the reader. What is meant, for instance, by satisfying law and justice *as to the spirit of them*, while the letter is dispensed with? In our current phraseology are doubtless to be found such expressions as, "satisfying Divine justice," "satisfying the demands of the law;" but this is metaphorical language. The law is personified; it stands for the lawgiver; for satisfaction is rendered not to the law, but to the giver of the law; and to satisfy the law, is to satisfy the lawgiver. Now, if Mr. Fuller's statements be tried by this test, their indefiniteness will instantly become apparent; "a satisfaction may be made to the lawgiver, as to the spirit of law and justice, while the letter is dispensed with."

There is one sense which may be attached to the expression, "to satisfy the law," (though even in this sense the expression is figurative,) to which I would particularly advert, before I proceed to explain the nature of the satisfaction of Christ; as it will afford, perhaps, the best opportunity of exposing one of the most common mistakes which exist, in reference to the atonement of our Lord. To satisfy the law is to *fulfil* the law, either in reference to its precepts or its penalty. The law may be said (figuratively) to be satisfied, when its commands are obeyed, or its penalty is endured. Had the whole human race walked in their integrity; or, having fallen from it, had they, without exception, suffered the vengeance of eternal fire, the law would, in either case, in the sense explained above, have been satisfied. Now, as the whole of the human family has become guilty before God—as a part of that family will ultimately be saved, and so not endure, in their own persons, the penalty of the law, we have been in the habit of saying (and very justly, when the language is explained in harmony with subsequent statements) that the law was satisfied in their case by the endurance of this penalty by their substitute. And from hence has resulted a view of the nature of the atonement—or of that satisfaction to God for sin—to which I am about to direct the particular attention of the reader. It is, perhaps, not radically different from the notion of satisfaction

to which reference has been already made; yet it is so far modified as to justify, and even require, a separate consideration. "The elect"—for whom exclusively Christ is supposed to have died—"had exposed themselves to a certain amount of punishment; this precise amount, this exact number of stripes, was inflicted upon Christ;" and, of course, satisfaction for sin essentially consisted in the endurance, by the substitute, of the precise amount of punishment which must otherwise have been laid upon the transgressors themselves.

I do not wonder at the prevalence of this opinion among the thoughtless and the vulgar. It is just the kind of idea which is likely to present itself to an ignorant and a contracted mind. But I do greatly marvel to find it taking its place in better company—lifting up its deformed head where its presence could not have been anticipated. It involves in it a radical mistake as to the nature of the atonement, and to the manner in which the sufferings of our Lord operated to permit the escape, and the final salvation of the guilty. But the objections against this view of the nature of satisfaction for sin must be more fully unfolded in the next Lecture.

LECTURE IX.

ATONEMENT.

ITS NATURE CONTINUED.

THE objections against the notion that satisfaction for sin essentially consisted in the endurance, by the substitute, of the precise amount of punishment, which must otherwise have been laid upon the elect, are as follows:—

First, that it renders the deliverance of the elect from punishment a matter of justice to them. They may claim it as a right. It is, in this point of view, as if the atonement were the payment of a pecuniary debt, and is not less incompatible with the notion that grace is exercised in the pardon of sin. There may, indeed, consistently with this opinion, have been grace in the acceptance, and in the provision of a substitute; but, surely, if that substitute endured the precise amount of punishment which the strong arm of the law would have otherwise laid upon those whom he represented, there can be no grace in remitting it afterwards to them. How can it be thought that a double infliction of punishment, for the same offence, can exist under the righteous government of God!

Secondly, the sentiment opposed renders the high and glorious character of the Redeemer of no avail in the great work of atonement, since it grounds the efficacy of the atonement, not on the dignity of the sufferer, sustaining the moral power of the law, by the lustre which his obedience and passion have thrown both upon the equity of its requirements, and the justice of its curse; but on the alleged fact, that the precise amount of punishment which we must have sustained, was

endured by our surety. And, if this were the principle of the atonement—the manner in which it operated to obtain forgiveness—it is most manifest that any other being could as easily, and certainly, have atoned for sin, as the Redeemer himself, *if he could have sustained an equal amount of suffering*. Now, since it was only the *human nature* of our Lord that suffered—Deity being as incapable of suffering as of sin—who can doubt the power of Jehovah to have sustained *human nature*, apart from Deity, as it exists in one of the ordinary descendants of Adam, under a burden of suffering equal to that which was laid upon the Saviour? I reject the sentiment, therefore, because it necessarily implies that any man might have redeemed his brother.

Thirdly, the sentiment opposed is at direct variance with the declaration that Christ was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. It necessarily limits the *sufficiency* of the atonement to the elect. It forbids the supposition that it possesses power to secure the salvation of all men, even though all men should repent and believe the gospel; and thus it erects a barrier against their salvation, distinct from their indisposition to go to the Saviour. These consequences, which flow naturally and necessarily from the sentiment opposed, would of themselves determine me at once to reject it. In dealing with the consciences of sinners, it is of infinite importance to be enabled to assure them that the atonement, on which we invite them to rest their hopes for eternity, is sufficient to sustain those hopes; yea, to sustain the confidence of the whole human family, if every member of that family could be induced to repose his confidence upon it. But, according to the sentiment opposed, the *efficiency* of the atonement must of necessity be the exact measure of its *sufficiency*. It is utterly impossible that the one can extend in the slightest degree beyond the other. To hold the opinion, that Christ saves his people by bearing the precise number of stripes which they must have endured, and to maintain, in connexion with it, the unlimited sufficiency of the atonement, is pre-eminently absurd. There could be, in that case, no value in the atonement to the non-elect. It is, on this opinion,

inadequate in itself to save them. Nothing could render their salvation possible, and justify the Divine Being in presenting the invitations of the gospel to them, but a second sacrifice of himself by the Son of God. To attempt to parry this objection by alleging that the non-elect are ignorant that no provision is made for their salvation, is to resort, in my opinion, to a subterfuge which even a man of integrity, and, *a fortiori*, the ever-blessed God, must needs abhor.

Fourthly, the sentiment opposed involves in it a most manifest absurdity, and, indeed, a physical impossibility. It grounds the efficiency or value of the atonement on the alleged fact, that the same punishment was sustained by the substitute which must have been endured by those whom he represented. Now what was that punishment? Without committing myself upon a point, the proof of which is not necessary to the object I have in view, viz., that future punishment grows out of character and state; few, I apprehend, will deny that, at least, among its ingredients will be found remorse and despair. God will punish the finally impenitent by sustaining the powers of memory and conscience; and placing them in circumstances where their unholy principles shall produce in perfection and exuberance their native fruit; and this fruit will be their food, and their torment. Now it would be to add blasphemy to absurdity to affirm, that this part of the punishment of sin was sustained by the 'Holy Lamb of God. Certain consequences of sin are transferable, but not remorse. No righteous power in the universe can kindle this flame in the bosom of innocence. It is impossible that the Saviour can have been its prey.

Should it be alleged that punishment, the same in *amount*, though not in *kind*, was sustained by Christ, I would reply, First, that the admission of any change in the kind of punishment is an abandonment of the principle on which, as they suppose, the atonement proceeded. That principle is, that the law merely changed the person on whom it poured out its curse—that it smote the substitute instead of the sinner, but smote him *as it would have done the sinner*. If it smite him differently, whether that difference be one of degree,

or of kind, there is more than a change of person; and the atonement, if it be efficacious, must proceed on a different principle from that which is advocated by my opponents—on the principle to be afterwards illustrated, viz., that the sufferings of Christ sustained the power and efficacy of the moral government of God, while he passes by transgression for his own name's sake. I would reply, Secondly, that the supposition of the same amount of punishment having been endured by Christ, involves in it a physical impossibility. The degree of suffering from which the atonement of Christ delivers his people, is infinite—for they must have suffered for ever. If, then, the principle of the atonement were that which I am now opposing, i. e., if Christ saves his people by sustaining the exact amount of suffering which they must have endured, nothing can be more manifest than that the amount of suffering sustained by him must have been infinite—infinite in degree, because it was not so in duration. But, as it was the human nature of our Lord exclusively that suffered, his suffering cannot have been infinite in degree, since even Deity itself cannot sustain a created nature under an infinite load of suffering; in other words, God cannot deify a creature. It is sufficient to say that Christ endured that measure of suffering which was necessary to preserve the efficiency of moral government, even while pardon is bestowed upon the guilty.

Here, then, we seem to be involved in a difficulty. Pardon has been bestowed upon transgressors;—it could not have been granted unless a satisfaction had been made to God for their sin: they did not make that satisfaction by suffering the penalty of the law; and their substitute did not make it, as we have seen, by enduring the precise amount of punishment—the same in kind and degree—which would have been to them the penal consequence of their sin. How then did Christ satisfy the law for them? What is meant by satisfying Divine justice—or, which is the same thing, satisfying a just and holy God? What is the precise nature of that satisfaction which was rendered to him, as it has been stated, by the perfect obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ? To these questions, or rather to this one question, which has been put in different

forms to attract towards it more of deliberate attention, I fear we have been too much accustomed to rest satisfied with dark and indefinite replies. I am quite free to confess that, within the whole compass of my theological reading, I have not met with any thing which throws all the light upon it which I humbly think it is capable of receiving. The statements of *Staper*, an admirable compendium of which is given by a beloved brother, whose praise is in all the churches,* approach the most nearly to what would seem to be needed. Still the definition of satisfaction which is laid down in that work is too much generalized to prove of great practical benefit; and, with deference to our honoured friend, Dr. Smith, I would suggest that the phrase, "a compensation for the injury perpetrated" against a moral governor, does not much less need explanation than the term satisfaction itself. The questions still recur, "What is a compensation to a being in his public character, (for compensation to a private individual involves no difficulty,) or how is it to be made?" On this important subject, then, I solicit the kind and candid attention of the reader to the following remarks.

To make satisfaction for sin is, then, I would suggest, to do that which shall preserve to the moral government of God that powerful control over its subjects which the entrance of sin endangered, and which its unconditional forgiveness would have entirely destroyed. In explanation of this statement, let it be observed, that the government which God exercises over rational, and, therefore, accountable creatures, is moral in its nature; it is the government of motives, addressed to the understanding, the conscience, and the heart. The law which he has given to us constitutes one of the main instruments of this government. It addresses itself to two of the most powerful principles of our nature;—to our hopes, by promising an illustrious reward if we render obedience;—to our fears, by threatening to inflict a signal punishment if we venture upon rebellion. The tendency of this law to prevent disobedience is its moral power; and that power must

* Vide Dr. P. Smith on the Sacrifice of Christ, p. 287-8.

obviously be proportioned to the confidence which the subjects of the government repose on its promises and threatenings. If the former are viewed with distrust, they will not exsiste to obedience; if the latter are considered doubtful in regard to their execution, they will not deter from rebellion. Now consider for a moment what was the posture of affairs after rebellion had actually broken out under the Divine government. The transgressors had exposed themselves to the vengeance of the law; and the Legislator was put upon his trial, so to speak, whether the awful threatenings denounced by him against rebellion were mere idle, harmless threats or not. If, in these circumstances, the rebels had been permitted to remain unpunished, what would have been the consequence? Is it not manifest that the law would have lost its moral power; and, the instrument of the Divine government becoming utterly impotent, that anarchy would have ensued in every part of his dominions? It was, therefore, imperative upon the moral Governor to demand satisfaction; i. e., (for such appears to me to be the precise idea which we should attach to the term,) to require that to be done which should preserve to his law all the power to preserve order and tranquillity in his government which had been originally possessed by it. This object might have been secured, or satisfaction might have been obtained, by the infliction of the threatened punishment upon his rebel subjects. To have resorted to this measure would, however, have involved the utter destruction of the offenders themselves, and preserved the authority and moral power of the Divine government, merely that a bloody sceptre might be wielded over myriads of intelligent beings, crushed by the rod of the Divine indignation. To have preserved the authority of the law at this dreadful expense, would have brought no glory to the Divine Being, unless no other method of sustaining its influence could have been devised. An expedient was, therefore, sought and resorted to—the expedient revealed in the gospel. The Second Person of the adorable Trinity, in harmony with his own volition, having authority to lay down his life, was substituted in the place of the guilty, and by his perfect obedience unto death, made

satisfaction for their sins ; i. e., he preserved to the law and government of God, that moral power to prevent the inroads of rebellion which the entrance of sin had enfeebled, and threatened finally to destroy. This all-important result, viz., the preservation of the efficacy of the system of moral government of God, in connexion with the non-execution of the threatenings denounced against the transgressor, is secured by the surpassing honour which the obedience and death of Christ reflected upon the Divine law ; and the powerful and decided proof it exhibited, that sin could never be permitted to pass unpunished. Who does not hear a voice from Calvary, " If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ? " It is true, doubtless, that it was only the human nature of our Lord that suffered ; yet, in consequence of the ineffable and mysterious union of that nature with the Divine, it is impossible to look upon his sufferings in the same light with those of a mere man. Their moral influence upon the subjects of the Divine government is prodigiously greater than if they had been endured by Paul, or even Gabriel himself. When we recollect that he who died for us was a being in whom " dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,"—that the law was honoured in its precepts by the obedience, and in its penalty by the death, of a being so exalted and glorious as the Son of God, it is utterly impossible to escape the conclusion, that the law must be perfectly holy, just, and good ;—that the violation of its precepts must be pregnant with incalculable guilt,—and cannot fail to be followed by the most tremendous consequences. It is thus that the atonement of Christ removes the anger of God, and reconciles the world to him. It effects no change in the state of his feelings in his private character ; it does not abate his personal disapprobation either of sin, or of sinners ; but it reconciles Him to us, or, in the language of Scripture, it reconciles us to Him, in his public character. It removes the necessary opposition of his government to us. It renders it competent to him to remit the punishment due to our sins, and even to raise us, for the sake of his Son, to distinguished honour and happiness, without destroying or impairing the moral power of his law—

the instrument by which the government of the world is carried on. Yea, more than all this it accomplishes. It reflects more honour upon the law than could have been seen encircling it, if man had continued obedient; or, if man had suffered its penalty, becoming disobedient; i. e., it has made a full and perfect satisfaction for sin.

The general conclusion, then, at which we have arrived, and which appears to me so important in its bearings upon the subject, is, that justice, in the case of a moral governor is satisfied, or, more correctly, that the moral governor is satisfied, when, as the consequence of transgression, an amount of suffering is endured which will restore to the violated and paralyzed law its original power to prevent the inroads of rebellion. It may not be impossible, perhaps, though I do not regard it as necessary, to pursue this subject a little further; and to ascertain the principles which regulate this amount, both in the case of the transgressor, and in that of a substitute. I submit with much diffidence the following remarks to the candid consideration of the reader.

That justice is satisfied—or that the efficiency of the law is preserved—when a measure of suffering is laid upon the transgressor proportioned to his desert, is a position the truth of which will be admitted by all. Yet the statement is indefinite, and must remain so, till we know the amount of this desert; or, rather, till we ascertain the measure by which its amount is decided. That measure, then, it is further stated, is the law of God. The transgressor deserves to endure the precise amount of punishment which the Divine law attaches to his crime. This statement, also, will be admitted. Yet there is another question to which it does not appear to me that sufficient attention has been given; it is the following: “What is it that guides the Great Eternal in the decisions which he pronounces? By what rule does he walk, in attaching the amount of punishment to transgression of which we are now speaking?” This is not a matter of accident; the sanctions of the law are not arbitrary. When the moral governor declares, in his law, that the transgressor shall suffer a certain amount of punishment—which is to us the measure of his

guilt, or desert—he acts under the guidance of certain fixed principles. What are they? What does a subject of moral government—of the moral government of God, for instance,—deserve to suffer? Can any other answer be returned than that he deserves to endure that precise amount of punishment which is adapted to answer the ends of moral government—to array the law in those terrors which are calculated to prevent, and which, if they were rightly considered, would prevent, the inroad of sin? To attach to transgression any amount short of this, would be folly; and, therefore, useless cruelty. To attach an amount beyond this would be unnecessary; and, therefore, malevolence, and injustice. The fact is, that guilt, i. e., desert of punishment, can only exist in connexion with a moral system. This is true, also, of its opposite, to which we may give the name of moral merit. Both guilt and moral merit necessarily suppose the pre-existence of moral government; for they are, in fact, the claim upon the head of that government which the conduct of its subjects gives them to its punishment, or its rewards. There is a difference in this point of view between guilt and merit, and virtue and vice. The two latter do not seem necessarily to suppose the existence of moral government. Hence, though Jehovah is a perfectly holy Being, and perfectly happy on that account, we never say that he deserves to be so, because he is not a subject of moral government.

In the case of a transgressor, then, justice is satisfied when that measure of punishment is inflicted upon him, which will restore to the law its original power and efficiency. So far every thing seems to be tolerably plain. It is only when we approach a case of substitution that much difficulty is experienced. Granting, that moral government will at all admit the principle of substitution, (and that it will do this is manifest from the fact that it has done it; nor do I see any difficulty in the case, where the individual presenting himself in the place of the transgressor has a right to do it—and where the acceptance of him would equally answer the ends of moral government,) the question is, “With what measure of suffering in the substitute will justice be satisfied? Must

he, in all cases, bear the exact amount which the guilty party himself would have sustained?" To this question I reply very firmly in the negative. The same principles which afforded direction in reference to the transgressor himself, will guide us here. Justice, accepting of the substitute, is satisfied with that measure of suffering, in his case, which will as effectually secure the honour and influence of the law, and the consequent safety of the government, as if the transgressor himself had been the victim. Should the substitute be greatly superior in character and station to the criminal, the ends of moral government may be as effectually secured—perhaps indeed more so—by the infliction of a few strokes upon him, as by the laying of the whole number upon the offender in his own person. Should the substitute be a being of infinite dignity and glory, a still inferior degree of suffering would be required; nay, justice might be as completely satisfied by the infliction of a single stroke upon him, as if not only the guilty individual himself, but the whole race to which he belonged, had suffered the full amount of punishment which the law attached to their crimes; i. e., atonement would be made for the whole race; or, which is the same thing, the obstacles which formerly opposed the bestowment of pardon upon the whole, or any part of the race, would be removed. It would be competent to the moral governor to pardon one or all, without destroying the influence of his law, and endangering the safety of his government. I have been exhibiting the substitution of the Saviour himself; and the important bearing of these statements upon the extent of the atonement, will be more particularly noticed when we advance to that interesting branch of the subject.

I would just observe, before I proceed to the next point of inquiry, that the general views already presented to the reader, will guide to an explanation of the phrase, "the value of the sufferings of Christ," somewhat different from that which is usually attached to it. It is generally, I believe, understood to denote the intrinsic excellence, or virtue, of the act of our Lord in offering himself as a sacrifice for our sins. To me it appears that this intrinsic excellence, though essential to the value of his sufferings, did not constitute it. That value is

rather to be regarded as consisting in their tendency, in consequence of their manifestation of the righteousness of the law, and the danger consequent upon transgression, to preserve unimpaired the moral power of the law, even while pardon is extended to those who have violated it.

Thirdly, we now proceed to show the ground on which pardon flows to those who repent and believe the gospel on account of this sacrifice;—or the connexion which exists between it, and the forgiveness of sin.

The observations which would seem to be required on this particular, have been so completely anticipated, that we might proceed at once to the following section, were it not proper to examine the statement of those writers who maintain that the atonement is, in fact, the channel through which forgiveness flows to the penitent, but avow at the same time, that there is no discoverable connexion between the one and the other;—or, that it is impossible for us to explain the manner in which the sacrifice of our Lord operated to procure the pardon of sin.

In this class of writers, we are constrained to place one individual, to whom all who attach paramount importance to the doctrine of atonement, are ready to confess the deepest obligations. I allude to the very learned and talented Dr. M'Gee. I cannot but regard the language of this powerful writer, in reference to this point, as the greatest blemish in his valuable work. "The sacrifice of Christ was never deemed by any who did not wish to calumniate the doctrine of atonement, to have made God placable, but merely viewed as the means appointed by the Divine wisdom, by which to bestow forgiveness." (Vol. i., p. 22.) Having advanced this general statement, which is true in one sense, and false in another, he proceeds, "But still it is demanded, in what way can the death of Christ, considered as a sacrifice of expiation, be conceived to operate to the remission of sins, unless by appeasing a being who otherwise would not have forgiven us?" To this, he adds, "The answer of the Christian is, I know not, nor does it concern me to know, in what manner the sacrifice of Christ is connected with the forgiveness of sins; it is enough that it is declared by God that this is the medium through

which my salvation is effected. I pretend not to dive into the secrets of the Almighty. I submit to his wisdom, and I will not reject his grace, because his mode of vouchsafing it is not within my comprehension." And, after an attempt to illustrate the subject by stating that we might put a similar inquiry in reference to the manner in which the supplications of one man avail on behalf of others, he adds, "The fact is, the want of discoverable connexion has nothing to do with either. Neither the sacrifice, nor the intercession, has, as far as we can comprehend, any efficacy whatever. All that we know, or can know, of the one or of the other, is, that it has been appointed as the means by which God has determined to act with respect to men." (Pp. 24, 25.)

Further occasions for remark upon the statements of Dr. Magee will occur. In the mean time I cannot but express the fullest concurrence in the judgment expressed by Dr. P. Smith, "that some passages in Dr. Magee's work indicate a material difference from those views which I think it my duty to maintain upon the real value of the Redeemer's sacrifice—its relation to the moral attributes and government of God—its connexion with the Divine nature of Christ—its efficiency—and its application." (Vide Note 15th, 1st Edition.)

No doubt can be entertained that it is dangerous to attempt to be wise above what is written; yet, with attention to this maxim, we should blend the practical recollection, that it is as much a duty to aim at reaching the height of revelation, as to refrain from every effort to rise above it. Now I cannot think that the Scriptures are silent on this point; and to me, I confess, it appears not a little singular that a writer who entertains those views of the nature of the atonement which have been presented in the foregoing pages, and which seem to be held by Dr. Magee, should be able to veil from himself the connexion which exists between the sacrifice of Christ, and the forgiveness of sin. Did not the atonement of the Saviour exhibit the righteousness of God—the rectitude of his law—the impossibility of transgressing it with impunity? Did it not thus render it possible for the moral Governor to pardon sin, without endangering the safety of his government? And,

if we maintain this, what do we, in effect, but affirm, in different words, the *tendency* of that atonement to secure forgiveness? If the essential nature of Jehovah is love, and if the atonement of his Son broke down the barriers which the necessity of supporting his government had erected to prevent its communication to men, what mystery can there be in its flowing to them after that event? What connexion can be more natural—so necessary indeed—as that which exists between the sacrifice of our blessed Lord, and the issuing, in the first place, of an universal proclamation of mercy; and, in the second place, the bestowment of pardon upon those who seek this mercy, in this divinely appointed manner? Dr. Magee did not manifest his usual discrimination when he denied, in effect at least, that the atonement is founded on the Divine implacability. He does not make the necessary distinction between the public and the private character of Jehovah. It were to dishonour him, to attribute implacability to him in the one character, but not in the other. A judge ought, as we have said, to be implacable; i. e., not capable of being induced to pardon, when the law says, Inflict punishment. It is his honour and perfection to be so. He must listen to no plea for mercy, which does not bring the case within the range of those to which mercy may be extended according to law; and then it loses, partially at any rate, its character of mercy. The sacrifice of Christ did render Jehovah placable; i. e., it rendered it possible for him, consistently with the claims and the safety of his government, to show mercy. It rendered it possible for the essential and infinite placability of the universal Parent, to develop itself in the actions of the Judge;—possible for him to unveil to us his heart of love, by bringing us to enjoy the unutterable felicities of heaven through the death of his Son. Still I do not recommend the phraseology, that the death of Christ rendered the Father placable, because it may be misunderstood; and is, in fact, in great danger of being so;—the word implacability being generally conceived to imply, though it does not necessarily imply, malevolence. This does not, however, justify Dr. Magee in throwing upon it unmingled contempt and scorn.

LECTURE X.

ATONEMENT.

THE NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

THE different branches of this great subject so far involve each other, as to render it difficult, or rather impossible, to avoid, in the discussion of one branch, the introduction of remarks which appear essential to the elucidation of another. The statements already made to illustrate the nature of the atonement, and the connexion which exists between the sacrifice of Christ, and the forgiveness of sin, exhibit with a considerable degree of clearness the necessity of that atonement. This important branch of the subject must not, however, be thus cursorily dismissed. The reader's attention is, therefore, called to the following position, as that which is about to be defended; viz., that, as far as we are able to judge, there existed a moral necessity for the sufferings and death of Christ, in order to the forgiveness of sin. This position is to be maintained, not only against those who altogether deny the doctrine of the atonement; but against others, who acknowledge that, in point of fact, pardon does flow to us through the atonement, while they are backward to affirm, and contend, indeed, that we have no right to affirm, that it could not have made its way to us through any other channel.

The latter appears to be the opinion of Dr. Magee. He gives the following as the title of one of the notes appended to his discourses: "The doctrine of atonement falsely charged with the presumption of pronouncing on the necessity of Christ's death." (P. 188.) "That men could not have been forgiven unless Christ had suffered to purchase the forgive-

ness, is no part," he assures us, "of the doctrine of atonement as held by the Church of England." Now, if his Lordship had merely intended to deny that we are entitled to affirm that men could not have been forgiven unless that particular mode of satisfying Divine justice which the gospel reveals, had been resorted to, I should not have taken any exception against his statements. It would be hazardous in us to affirm, that, by the unsearchable and infinite wisdom of the Deity, no other mode of effecting this important object could have been devised. But the difference is great between denying the necessity of satisfaction for sin altogether, and denying the necessity of a particular mode of satisfaction; and, unless I have mistaken his Lordship's meaning, it is of the former that he seems to intimate doubt. I say *seems* to intimate doubt, because the following passage appears to grant, at the conclusion, what it denies at the commencement. "When, therefore, Grotius, Stillingfleet, and Clarke, are charged with contending for the necessity of a vindication of God's honour, either by the suffering of the offenders, or by that of Christ in their room, they are by no means to be considered as contending that it was impossible for God to have established such a dispensation as might enable him to forgive the sinner *without some satisfaction to his justice*, which is the sense forcibly put upon their words; but that, according to the method and dispensation which God's wisdom has chosen, there results *a moral necessity* of such vindication, founded in the *wisdom* and *prudence* of a Being, who has announced himself to mankind as an upright Governor, resolved to maintain the observance of his laws." (P. 191.) Now, if there exists this moral necessity for such a vindication, how could a dispensation have been established which would have admitted of pardon without it? That it is both absurd and impious "to enter into the councils of the Almighty, and to decide what infinite wisdom *must* have determined under a constitution of things different from the present," we are as fully persuaded as his Lordship. But, when we maintain the moral necessity of the atonement, we make no approach to such unhallowed license. Our statements are based upon facts—facts admitted by himself, as well

as by us. Jehovah is the head of a system of moral government—that system has been invaded by sin—the transgressor is pardoned through the atonement. It is, of course, on contemplating the entrance of sin, that we affirm the necessity of satisfaction. That necessity is established by the fact of its having been made. The necessity of a satisfaction equal in magnitude to that which was actually rendered, is also established by fact—the fact, that one of inferior importance was not presented. Jehovah would not have gone to greater expense than was necessary. Had there been any other medium for the remission of sin, equally honourable to the character, and safe to the government of God, not requiring so illustrious a sacrifice as the death of his Son, then most assuredly the Saviour would not have died upon the cross. It is by facts, then, that we justify our statements in reference to the necessity of the atonement. By necessity we mean, of course, a moral necessity;—a necessity originating in the rectoral character of Jehovah, and the nature of the government which he exercises over intelligent creatures; such a necessity, in short, as is exhibited in those memorable words of the apostle, “It became Him, of whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.”

There are those, however, who deny at least one of the facts to which we have now referred, and who, of course, cannot feel the force of the argument just urged upon those by whom the whole are acknowledged. Unitarians, who harmonize on this subject with Deists, join to represent a satisfaction for sin as unnecessary; and deny, of course, that any such satisfaction was intended or made by the death of Christ. Dr. Priestley, in his history of the doctrine of atonement, says, “That the great object of the mission and death of Christ, was to give the fullest proof of a state of retribution, in order to supply the strongest motives to virtue; and the making an express regard to the doctrine of a resurrection to eternal life, the principal sanction of the laws of virtue, is an advantage peculiar to Christianity. By this peculiar advantage the gospel reforms the world, and *remission of sins is consequent on*

reformation. For, although there are some texts in which the pardon of sin seems to be represented as dispensed in consideration of the sufferings, the merits, the resurrection, the life, the obedience of Christ; we cannot but conclude, upon a careful examination, that all these views of it are partial representations, and that, according to the plain general tenour of Scripture, the pardon of sin is, in reality, always dispensed by the free mercy of God, upon account of men's personal virtue, a penitent upright heart, and a reformed exemplary life, without regard to the sufferings or merit of any being whatever."

The Deist tells us, that, since obedience must be the object of God's approbation, and disobedience the ground of his displeasure, it must follow, by natural consequence, that when men have transgressed the Divine commands, repentance, and amendment of life, will place them in the same situation as if they had never offended."

"It is lamentable to confess," says Magee, "that the name of Warburton is to be coupled with the defence of the deistical statement just made. But no less true is it than strange, that in the account of natural religion which that eminent writer has given in the ninth book of the '*Divine Legation*,' he has pronounced, in terms the most unqualified, upon the intrinsic and necessary efficacy of repentance; asserting, that it is plainly obvious to human reason, from a view of the connexion that must exist between the creature and his Maker, that, whenever man forfeits the favour of God by a violation of the moral law, his sincere repentance entitles him to the pardon of his transgressions."

In opposition, then, to those writers who maintain the necessary connexion between repentance and forgiveness, I argue that they have taken up a false and a useless position.

1st. *It is a false position.* Granting that the systems afforded any security for the repentance of the transgressor, there are powerful reasons against the supposition that penitence will place him in the same situation as if he had never offended; for,

First, It is manifest that the case of the penitent differs

very materially from that of the innocent man. It is obviously, therefore, most unlikely that, under the government of a Being who has declared that he will render to all the subjects of his government according to their works, the transgressor, though a penitent, should receive the honour and reward which the law attaches to perfect obedience. Were that the case, how could the ways of God be equal?

Secondly, In the case of human governments, repentance does not place the transgressor in the situation in which he stood before the commission of the crime; nay, it does not even arrest the descent of the sword of vengeance. When did an individual guilty of theft, or murder, or treason, escape on account of his sorrow for what he had done, although his sorrow were most profound as well as sincere? When, indeed, was the plea of penitence, in bar of punishment, urged by a criminal, unless the horror of his situation had unsettled the balance of his mind? Never. A moment's reflection serves to convince us that such a plea could not be regarded; that, strongly as the personal feelings of the judge might prompt him to the exercise of mercy, a regard to his character, his duty, his office, to the safety of the government, and the welfare of the country, ought to lead to their suppression, and constrain him, as the mouth of the law, to pronounce the sentence which that law attaches to the offender's crime.

Thirdly, In reference to that part of the Divine government which falls under our observation, it is not the case that repentance places an individual in the position which he occupied previously to his transgression. "Actual experience of the course of nature," says Dr. Magee, "directly contradicts the assertion." "In the common occurrences of life, the man who, by intemperance and voluptuousness, has injured his character, his fortune, and his health, does not find himself instantly restored to the full enjoyment of these blessings, on repenting of his past misconduct, and determining on future amendment. Now, if the attributes of Jehovah demand that the punishment should not outlive the crime, on what ground shall we justify this temporal dispensation? The difference in degree cannot affect the question in the least. It matters

not whether the punishment be of long or of short duration ; whether in this world, or in the next. If the justice and goodness of God require that punishment should not be inflicted when repentance has taken place, it must be a violation of these attributes to permit any punishment whatever, the most slight, or the most transient. Nor will it avail to say that the evils of this life, attendant upon vice, are the effects of an established constitution, and follow in the way of natural consequence. Is not that established connexion itself the effect of the Divine decree ? Are not its several operations as much the appointment of its Almighty Framer, as if they had individually flowed from his immediate direction ? But, besides, what reason have we to suppose that God's treatment of us in a future state, will not be of the same nature as we find it in this—according to established rules, and in the way of natural consequence ? Many circumstances might be urged, on the contrary, to evince the likelihood that it will. This, however, is not necessary to our present purpose. It is sufficient that the Deist cannot prove that it will not. Our experience of the present state of things evinces that indemnity is not the consequence of repentance here : can he adduce a counter experience that it will be hereafter ?" (Pp. 5, 6.)

Fourthly, The repentance of man is necessarily imperfect ; it is, on this account, in addition to others, impossible to conceive that it should place the transgressor in the same situation as before the offence. Why should our opponents have represented repentance as necessary to forgiveness, if they had not felt that some reparation is due to God, and his law, for the injury which sin inflicts upon both ? To make this reparation mere obedience is obviously incompetent ; for, since perfect obedience is at all times our duty, present obedience can exhaust present obligations only. It cannot furnish a surplus of merit to set off against past demerit. The opponents of the doctrine of atonement have been consequently constrained to throw the penitence of the reformed transgressor into the scale with his obedience, to give it the greater weight ; that, while his future obedience may exhaust his future obligations, his penitence may obliterate the former unfulfilled demands of the

law. Now the present state of the argument does not require me to dwell upon the inefficacy of perfect penitence, I merely remind the reader that the penitence of man is necessarily imperfect; so that the very element which is recommended by our opponents, for the cleansing away of sin, being itself filthy, must, instead of purifying, leave a fresh stain upon the conscience, when an effort is made to wash with it the former stain away.

Fifthly, It is impossible to conceive that repentance should place an individual in the situation in which he stood before transgression, because, even though it were perfect, it has no power to remove the obstacles arising out of the character and government of God against the bestowment of pardon upon the guilty. To illustrate and confirm this assertion, it will be necessary to state precisely the nature of these obstacles, that the essential incompetency of repentance to their removal, and the consequent necessity of the atonement, may more distinctly appear.

It is impossible to have it too powerfully impressed upon our minds, that the obstacles to pardon, to which we have now referred, arose entirely out of the rectoral character of the Deity. They may all be resolved into the necessity under which he was placed, as a moral Governor, to preserve to the law all the efficiency which, as an instrument of moral government, it is possible for it to possess—which efficiency cannot be sustained, unless the conduct of the moral Governor be such as to evince the high sense he entertains of the excellence of the law, and the confidence with which its subjects may rely on the performance of its promises, and the execution of its threatenings.

Let us examine this matter a little more attentively. “Sustaining, as we do, various relations to God and to each other, there arise out of them, by necessary consequence, various obligations and duties. God is our Creator, our Preserver, our Benefactor, our Governor. He is the Framer of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits? He sustains us “by the word of his power;” for, as we are necessarily dependent beings, our continued existence is a kind of prolonged creation. We owe all that we possess to him; and our future blessings must

flow from his kindness. Now, there are obviously certain affections and actions which harmonize or correspond with these relations. To love and obey God manifestly befit our relation to him as that great Being from whom our existence, as well as all our comforts flow."

"We sustain various relations to each other. God has formed of one blood all the families of the earth. Mutual love, and brotherly kindness, the fruit of love, are required by this relation—they harmonize or correspond with it. We are children; we are loved, and guarded, and supported, and tended with unwearied assiduity by our parents. Filial affection and filial obedience are demanded by this relation; no other state of mind, no other conduct, will harmonize with it. We are, perhaps, on the other hand, parents. Instrumentally, at least, we have imparted existence to our children; they depend on us for protection, support, &c.; and to render that support, is required by the relation we bear to them."—(*Elements of Mental and Moral Science*, by the Author, p. 512.)

In the attention we pay to these duties, growing thus necessarily out of relations, the honour of God and the general good are deeply involved: and, therefore, they are enforced by legislative enactment. God has commanded us to love him with all our mind, and soul, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. This enforcement of duty is not an arbitrary act on the part of God. On the contrary, it is of the very essence of moral government; the welfare of the universe imperatively demands it.

Further, it is equally necessary that these legal enactments should be accompanied with penal sanctions to enforce obedience to them. Unless this were the case, what has been called the authority of the law—or its efficiency as an instrument of moral government—its power to regulate the conduct of men, could not be sustained. It is, in fact, the sanctions of the Divine law, as is the case with every other law, in connexion with its promises, which impart to it all the influence which it possesses. A mere statement of certain actions to be performed, and of others to be avoided, though it proceeded from the lips of one who had a right to assume the reins of govern-

ment, unless there were presented along with it the prospect of some good to be obtained by obedience, and some evil to be endured as the result of disobedience, would be utterly devoid of efficiency. It could not, in fact, be an instrument of moral government ; for moral government is the government of motives ; and nothing can constitute a motive to action, except the prospect of some good to be enjoyed, or some evil to be avoided ; which is, indeed, the same thing.

It may also be further observed, on this part of the subject, that penal sanctions are necessary to give the character of law to such an enumeration of actions as we have just referred to. "Law," says Jonathan Edwards, "must be enforced with threatenings of punishment, otherwise it fails of having the nature of a law, and is only of the nature of counsel or advice, or rather of a request. For one being to express his inclination or will to another concerning any thing he would receive from him, without any threatening annexed, but leaving it to the person applied to whether he will grant it or not, supposing that his refusal would be with impunity, is properly of the nature of a request. It does not amount to counsel or advice. No doubt, it falls far short of the nature of law-giving. For such an expression of one's will as this, is an expression of will without any expression of authority. It holds forth no authority for us merely to manifest our wills or inclinations to another ; nor, indeed, does it manifest any authority over a person applied to, to promise him rewards. So persons may, and often do, promise rewards to others for doing those things that they have no power to oblige them to. So may persons do to their equals ; so may a king do to others who are not his subjects. This is rather bargaining with others than giving them laws. That expression of will only is a law, which is exhibited in such a manner as to express the law-giver's power over the person to whom it is manifested—his power of disposal of him according as he complies or refuses—that which shows power over him so as to oblige him to comply ; or to make it to be his cost if he refuses." (Vol. viii., page 506.)

Further, the same reason which renders it necessary that legal enactments should exist—that they should be accompanied by penal sanctions, enforces also the execution of these sanctions. Without this execution, they would be utterly inefficacious. From them, as we have seen, the law derives, partly at least, the moral power which it exerts over the conduct of men—the fear of punishment constituting one of the motives to obedience. But, if the threatened punishment were not inflicted, the sanction would inspire no fear, and the law would accordingly lose its efficiency. “If the threatening,” says Edwards, “had no connexion with execution, it would be wholly void, and would be as no threatening; and so far as there is not a connexion with execution, whether that be in a greater or lesser degree, so far and in such a degree is it void, and so far approaches to the nature of no threatening, as much as if that degree of unconnexion was expressed in the threatening.” (P. 507.)

Besides, the issuing of threatenings, by which the legislative and authoritative part of moral government is rendered complete, implicates the character of the moral Governor. The efficiency of any law depends, in a great degree, upon the conceptions that are formed of him from whom it emanates—of the sincerity and degree of his hatred of the conduct which it condemns, and of the inflexibility of his determination not to allow it to pass unpunished. Now, if actions condemned by the Divine law were, even in a few instances, permitted to pass unnoticed, how would it be possible to prevent the adoption of the opinion by the subjects of his government, that the hatred which the Deity bears to sin, is not so deep and unconquerable as we might have inferred from the language of the law?—and that transgression would not necessarily be followed by punishment? The prevalence of this opinion would expose to the danger of universal transgression. The immunity enjoyed by some would be expected in his own case by every individual, and all would go astray.

The truth, as well as the holiness, of God is implicated by the issuing of the sanctions of the law. “The wages of sin,” says the moral Governor, “is death;” that is, leads to death,

and shall be followed by it. "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." Unless, then, vengeance be taken upon the workers of iniquity, or an expedient be devised by which satisfaction in some other mode shall be rendered to Divine justice, how can the truth of God be preserved? It is necessary to make the preceding distinction, because we, who maintain the doctrine of the atonement, must in fairness admit that the precise threatening of the law is not executed. That threatening is directed against the transgressor, immediately and exclusively. It is, "The soul that sinneth shall die;" not he, or a substitute in his place. It allots also a certain measure of punishment to be inflicted upon him. According, however, to those views of the nature of the atonement which have been exhibited in the preceding pages, it is not the transgressor, but a substitute, who actually suffers; and that substitute does not sustain the precise amount of punishment which must have been endured by the transgressor himself. It is, however, perfectly manifest, either that the law must take its course—or that it must be honoured, and its moral efficiency sustained, by the death of a substitute—or that the truth of the moral Governor must be abandoned as wholly incapable of proof; in that case it would cease to be of any practical use in the moral system. If the law says, "the soul that sinneth shall die," and it shall prove to be the case that neither did he die, nor a substitute for him, who could rescue the law-giver from the charge of falsehood? And, if the truth of the moral Governor be brought into suspicion, what can sustain the efficiency of his law?

It is, as we have seen, the fear of punishment, in connexion with the hope of reward—a fear and a hope inspired by the law—to which it owes all its efficiency. In the case of any law, this fear cannot exist without confidence in the truth of the lawgiver; since his threatenings, which are the direct instruments of producing it, would be mere idle words, possessed of no moral power whatever, were they regarded as proceeding from a being who might possibly curse where he had said he would bless, or bless where he had said he would curse.

Let us apply these more general remarks to the actual posture of affairs between God and man, that we may perceive more clearly the truth of the position we undertook to defend, viz., that, as far as we are able to judge, there existed a moral necessity for the sufferings and death of Christ, in order to the forgiveness of sin. Those legislative enactments, which constitute a perfect measure of our duty to God and to each other—enactments guarded by penal sanctions, the non-execution of which would deprive the Divine government of all influence and efficiency—have been violated by every subject of that government. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” The Lord looked down from heaven, to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God; and he found that all had gone out of the way, that there was none that did good, no, not one.” Thus the whole family of man had become guilty before God; i. e., in other words, they were legally exposed to that punishment which must, as we have seen, be inflicted, or the Divine government will be overthrown; his law losing the character of law—becoming a mere code of advice, with which individuals may or may not comply, as they are disposed, but being destitute of power to bind the consciences of any.

Such were the obstacles to the pardon of sin. Now what tendency, it may be asked, could repentance possess, however sincere and profound, to remove them? How could the moral efficiency of the law have been sustained—the moral perfections of Jehovah exhibited and vindicated—by repentance merely? The language of the threatening is not, “the soul that sinneth, and remains impenitent, shall die;” but, “the soul that sinneth shall die.” If, then, the transgressor had been pardoned on his repentance, what would there have been to teach the important moral lesson, that the sinner cannot escape with impunity? And unless general confidence be felt that there can be no impunity to the transgressor, what is there to prevent the inroads of rebellion? Few things can be more manifest to me, than that the certainty of obtaining pardon on repentance would have totally destroyed the authority of the law, and opened the flood-gates to every thing that is

degraded and abominable ; for as no rule can possibly be laid down in reference to the degree of repentance that was necessary, men would have contented themselves with a few heartless professions of penitence when the king of terrors made his appearance ; and thus, having wallowed in sensuality during their lives, would have gone at length into the presence of their Judge with a lie in their right hand ; and, for that lie, would have expected the reward of eternal life !

The position, then, of our opponents, that there is a necessary connexion between repentance and forgiveness is a false position. It is—

Secondly,—*a useless position.* There is no provision made, in the system of Unitarianism and Deism, to secure the repentance of the transgressor. That all men have sinned, will scarcely be denied by the Deist—certainly not by the Unitarian. Now, if they were able to prove that sincere repentance would certainly restore them to the favour of God, and place them in all respects in the position in which they had stood previously to their transgression, of what avail would it be, if, in point of fact, the sinner, left to himself, would never repent ?—would, on the contrary, proceed with headlong fury along the path on which he had entered, until he sank into eternal misery ? And yet, if any confidence is to be placed in the testimony of the sacred writers, the supposition I have made would certainly be realized. “As well may the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots, as they who have been accustomed to do evil, learn to do well.” The heart of stone, and such is the heart of the sinner, will never break of itself. Why should the Saviour have been exalted to give repentance, if repentance had been a self-originated principle of the human mind ? Why should the great promise of the new covenant have been, “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,” if sinners had been morally able to form and create their hearts anew ? Does not the volume of Divine revelation uniformly ascribe “a broken heart,” and “a contrite spirit,” to Divine and sovereign influence ? “Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” “The

wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Now the system of our opponents makes no provision for the communication of that sovereign influence, from on high, which is the exclusive cause of repentance in the heart of a sinner. They tell him—falsely tell him, as we have seen—that, if he repent, he shall be treated as though he had been innocent; but they do not tell him where, and how, he is to obtain repentance. They leave him to seek for salvation by the law of penitence—a law which cannot save him ; “ for, if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law,” (Gal. iii. 21)—but they do not direct him to any assistance in fulfilling that law. They leave him, in short, to perform a task to which he is so thoroughly indisposed, as totally to forbid the hope that he will undertake it ; and a task which, if performed, would fail to secure for him the reward which they promise—would leave him for ever at a distance from the kingdom of heaven !

From the whole of these statements, the necessity of the atonement is obvious. It was necessary to remove the obstacles to the bestowment of pardon, and to secure the influence of the Spirit by which the heart is softened and turned to God, and the sinner is brought to the enjoyment of those invaluable blessings, for the communication of which the atonement of Christ presents an honourable channel.

LECTURE XI.

ATONEMENT.

THE MANNER OF THE ATONEMENT ; ITS REALITY.

I HAVE followed Dwight in the phraseology of the first part of this division of the great subject, because there does not at present occur to my mind a better one, though I am not satisfied with it. The point to which I thought it advisable to devote a little attention, might perhaps be more appropriately designated the *matter* of the atonement, if so barbarous a phrase could be tolerated. The questions—"In what did the atonement consist, or what is to be regarded as constituting a part of it?" "Are we to consider atonement for sin as having been made by the death of Christ exclusively? or, are the previous sufferings of his life, and the obedience he rendered to the Divine law, to be regarded as having entered into its essence?"—will convey a tolerably distinct idea of the precise point to which I would, though very briefly, direct the attention of the reader.

A distinction has been made by divines between the active and the passive obedience of Christ, as they are called; that is, his conformity to the precepts of the Divine law, and his endurance of the penalty to which we had exposed ourselves by our breach of it. Both of these; including under the phrase, "the passive obedience," the whole of the sufferings of his life, as well as the agonies which he endured upon the cross, are considered by many as having entered into the satisfaction for sin to which we are indebted for our salvation. And it is not uncommon for men who embrace this general opinion, to make a very nice distinction here; and to ascribe

one part of our salvation to the active obedience, and another part to the passive obedience, of the Saviour. By the latter he redeems us, it is imagined, from guilt; by the former he merits for us the kingdom of heaven. By his death he restores us to the position which Adam occupied on his entrance upon his state of probation; by his obedience he places us in the condition in which Adam would have stood had he resisted temptation to the end of his course, and thus entitled himself to all the reward which the dispensation under which he was placed, warranted him to expect. There are others, again, who maintain that atonement was made by the passive obedience of Christ exclusively; and some, I believe, who imagine that no sufferings but those which he endured on the cross had any influence in procuring our salvation. They admit the necessity of his active obedience,—since the death of a transgressor could have possessed no merit to atone for sin;—but maintain that it was only requisite to enable him to present an acceptable oblation of himself upon the cross.

The opinions we form on this subject must necessarily be guided by our conceptions of the nature of the atonement. And there are no subjects on which it is more necessary, than on theological ones, to trace our opinions to the sources from which they spring. By this means error may be detected, of whose existence there had been no previous conception; and which by no other process could have been discovered. According to a celebrated maxim, “To trace an error to its fountain-head, is to refute it.” “The detection of a source of fallacy, is of more value than the refutation of a particular error. A truth is but half revealed, when it makes us know only that we have been in the wrong: the chief revelation is that which tells us of some principle within us that rendered the fallacy to us, for the time, a relative truth. We avoid only one error in knowing that we have been deceived; but we may avoid many errors in knowing *how that one has deceived us.*”

If we conceive that the atonement proceeded on the principles of pecuniary transactions—or, if we imagine that Christ saves us by enduring the precise amount of suffering which we

must have sustained,—we are driven to the necessity of embracing the latter of the opinions stated above; viz., that atonement was made by the passive obedience of Christ exclusively. But if, with Dr. Wardlaw, “we regard it as a grand general manifestation of the righteousness of God, by which the claims of justice are, in the spirit of them, fully satisfied, and the glory of this attribute thus maintained in the exercise of mercy;” or, if we take the view of it which has been presented in the preceding pages; i. e., if we consider it a scheme, devised by Divine wisdom and goodness, for the purpose of rendering the bestowment of pardon consistent with the honour and efficiency of the law, and the consequent safety of the government, it will be impossible to avoid arriving at the conclusion, that the atonement comprehended every thing which possessed a tendency to secure this important result. We shall feel compelled to acknowledge that the Saviour made atonement by obeying the precepts of the law, as well as by suffering its penalty; because that obedience tended to honour the law; to show that its precepts are holy, just, and good; that the Lawgiver entertains the highest possible sense of its rectitude; and that, consequently, it cannot be violated with impunity.

That atonement was made by the passive obedience of Christ exclusively, appears to me an opinion so manifestly inconsistent with the view of its nature, which has been exhibited in the preceding pages, that I can scarcely persuade myself to believe it does not always originate from some of those mistaken conceptions, in regard to its nature, which have been already examined: at all events, it harmonizes with them. “Christ has paid my debt,” says one, “and hence I am delivered.” Now what are likely to be the views of this individual in reference to what we have denominated the *manner* of the atonement? What idea is he likely to attach to the term debt? He owes, it is true, a *debt* of *obedience* to the Divine law; but, were he to include *that* debt in his conceptions, it would seem to follow, that he is personally released from all obligations to yield obedience to this law. He accordingly settles down into the conviction, that it was his debt of *suf-*

fering that was paid by the Redeemer; or, in other words, that atonement was made by the death of Christ exclusively.

Again, if Christ rescues his people by enduring the exact amount of suffering which they must have sustained, there could manifestly be no atoning efficacy in any thing but his sufferings. The obedience which he paid to the law must, in that case, be regarded merely as a preparatory and necessary *qualification* for the great work of presenting to God a satisfaction for sin.

Atonement was, then, made by the obedience as well as the sufferings of our Lord; but the ascription of one part of our salvation to his obedience, and of another part to his death, savours too much of the technical theology of the schools. It is a distinction unsupported by any of the representations of the word of God. The general statements of the Scripture teach us to consider the obedience unto death of the Son of God—(for he obeyed when he suffered, and suffered when he obeyed)—the fulfilment, by Him, of all righteousness during his life—the sorrow and grief which pressed so heavily upon him from the manger to the cross—together with the bodily and mental agonies which he endured when he hung upon the tree, as constituting together that great work by which the Divine character is glorified,—the honour and efficiency of the Divine law sustained,—and the safety of the Divine government secured, while pardon is bestowed upon the transgressor who believes in him. It has been said, indeed, that the obedience of Christ vindicates the preceptive part of the law, and his sufferings, its penalty; as if the obedience did not vindicate the penalty, nor the sufferings the precepts; neither of which is the case. And, with reference to the latter, it may be observed, that no vindication of the rectitude of the precepts of the law can be conceived of, more striking and conclusive, than that which was supplied by the death of our Lord. A penalty arising out of the breach of unrighteous precepts, would not have been endured by him. And it is merely because his death tended more eminently to honour the Divine law—to preserve its efficiency as an instrument of moral government—than either the obedience or suffering of his previous life, that

the blessings of pardon, justification, and eternal life, are more frequently ascribed to it, than to his active obedience. It is not because there was not atoning influence in the one,—but more, so to speak, of atoning influence in the other; for what is atonement, but the removal of those obstacles, on the part of the Divine government, which prevented the communication of his grace to man? Now, to the removal of these obstacles, the righteousness of Emmanuel contributed as really, if not as powerfully, as his death. Hence the exaltation and glory of Christ are represented, not merely as the reward of his death, but of his previous humiliation and sufferings. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in *heaven*, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. ii. 5—11.)

The obedience of Christ, and the sufferings of his life, must not then be considered merely as necessary acts of preparation for the great work of atonement; they enter, on the contrary, into the very essence of the atonement; though we mainly ascribe that blessed result to his death. The sufferings by which that important and solemn event was preceded, were not so emphatically mental sufferings, as those which immediately attended the close of his career of woe. When in the garden, it is said of him, that his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. He manifested there, and especially on the cross, unequivocal symptoms of the most deep and overwhelming affliction. Just before he yielded up his spirit, he cried with a loud voice, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”—an exclamation, clearly evincing that the most bitter ingredient in the cup of suffering, then put into

his hands, was the hiding of his Father's countenance. I am well aware that it is difficult, or rather impossible, to form adequate conceptions on this deeply, this awfully mysterious subject; but if we regard our blessed Lord, on this occasion, more in the light of a perfectly holy man, than we are, perhaps, accustomed to do, shutting out of our consideration the Divinity within, (in which light we are, I apprehend, not only authorized, but obliged to view him; since it was only the human nature that could suffer,) we shall be likely to succeed better. Conceive, then, of the Saviour extended on the cross. He had a view of the evil of sin, incomparably more distinct and affecting, than was ever possessed by man or angel before or since that time. The intercourse which, as man, he had with God, in consequence of the union of the two natures in his person, was entirely *sui generis*. It was incomparably more intimate than had ever been enjoyed by a merely human prophet. It gave opportunity for the powers of the human nature to reach a higher point of advancement and perfection, than could possibly have been the case in other circumstances. It may be supposed, also, that, for a short time previous to our Lord's final sufferings, and during their continuance, there was communicated to the human nature a more than ordinarily vivid and affecting view of the evil of sin,—of its irreconcilable hostility to the character, and perfections, and government of God,—of the infinite abhorrence in which it must be held by Jehovah,—and the awful consequences which it justly entails upon all who practise it. It would be unpardonable to speak with confidence upon a subject like this—a subject on which I have never seen any thing which fully satisfies my own mind; but I would suggest, with much deference to my brethren, whether this peculiarly vivid view of the evil of sin, did not constitute one of the penal ingredients of the cup which was then put into his hands. It will constitute, doubtless, an ingredient in that cup of wrath which is mingling for the finally impenitent in the future state. Standing, therefore, as the Saviour did, in the place of the sinner,—conscious of the infinite dignity of his *person*, (though the inferior *nature* only suffered,)—and possessing this peculi-

arly vivid and affecting view of the infinite odiousness of sin, it is not for us properly to appreciate what the Saviour must have suffered when he was treated as if he had been the sinner;—when he died the death of the sinner,—a death abhorred by men, and accursed by God; and this acute and inconceivable suffering was aggravated by the withholdment of counterbalancing support. God “hid his face from him;” i. e., says a late able writer, “he withheld from him wholly those manifestations of supreme complacency in his character and conduct, which he had always before made. As this was itself a most distressing testimony of the Divine anger against sin, it is probably implied in the language of the prophet, “It pleased the Father to bruise him.”

“The views and feelings,” proceeds this writer, “of one mind towards another can produce the highest sense of suffering of which we are capable. The esteem and love of intelligent beings are, when united, the most exquisite of all enjoyments; and are naturally, and, in all probability, necessarily coveted more than any other, except the approbation of our own mind. Their mere indifference to us, when they have an opportunity of being so far acquainted with us as to give room for being esteemed and loved by them, is ordinarily the source of severe mortification. In proportion as they are more intelligent and worthy, their love and esteem are more important to us; and the refusal of it excites in us more intense distress.”

“The complacency of God, whose mind is infinite, and whose disposition is perfect, is undoubtedly the first of all possible enjoyments. The loss of it, therefore, *and the consequent suffering of his hatred and contempt*, are undoubtedly the greatest evils which a created mind can suffer; evils which will, in all probability, constitute the primary anguish experienced in the world of woe. Omniscience and Omnipotence are certainly able to communicate, during even a short time, to a finite mind, such views of the *hatred and contempt of God* towards sin and sinners, and of course towards a substitute for sinners, as would not only fill its capacity of suffering, but probably put an end to its existence. In this manner, I

apprehend, the chief distresses of Christ were produced. In this manner, principally, was that testimony of God against disobedience exhibited to the Redeemer, and ultimately to the universe, which so solemnly supported the sanctions of the Divine law, and so illustriously honoured the Divine government, as to prevent the pardon of sin from being regarded by intelligent creatures as the mere indulgence of a weak and changeable disposition in the infinite Ruler."

While there is so much to commend in this generally admirable passage, one cannot but most deeply regret the incaution, to say the least of it, of one or two of its statements. I refer more especially to the implied assertion, that our Lord actually sustained the contempt and anger of God. No sober-minded man can admit this. The fact of the case most unquestionably is, that the Father did not despise him,—was not angry with him when he hung upon the cross. Never, indeed, did he regard him with such ineffable complacency. How, then, could he manifest that displeasure which did not exist? The supposition, in the case of God, is impossible. But he might withhold the manifestations of that complacency which did exist. Dr. Dwight seems to have departed, most unnecessarily and most unfortunately, from the well-chosen phraseology with which his statement commences. At the beginning of the discussion, he says, that "God *withdrew* from him" (I would rather say, *withheld* from him) "those manifestations of his supreme complacency which he had formerly made." I apprehend that this, and only this, is warranted by the language of the sacred writer. "He hid his face from him;" words which do not convey the idea of a positive act of removal, but the cessation of accustomed communications. I cannot, therefore, but regret that this respectable writer should, in the progress of his discussion, vary his statement so materially from the non-communication of former manifestations of love, to the actual manifestations of contempt and anger. There is no reason to suppose that that awful cloud which oppressed the mind of our blessed Lord, when he hung upon the cross, was the result of any positive act on the part of God. Ceasing to act is all that can, with

any reason, be attributed to the Father; i. e., discontinuing those manifestations of love which he had formerly made to the Son. It has sometimes, indeed, struck me, that of the light of his Father's countenance, or his conscious sense of his favour, the Saviour may have been rather indirectly deprived, than otherwise. The sun may pour forth its full effulgence, but we do not see it if a cloud should intervene. May not, then, the awful and affecting sense of the evil of sin, which, as we have supposed, was imparted to our Lord during his closing sufferings,—together with the mental agonies which that sight could not but occasion,—in addition to his deep sense of shame, and his acute bodily pains,—may not these, combined, have constituted that intervening cloud? May they not, for a season, have absorbed all his attention, and thus, by natural consequence, deprived him of that exalted enjoyment, which he habitually derived from a conscious sense of his Father's favour? May not this be a sufficient explanation of the manner in which God hid his face from his Son? I merely throw out this as a suggestion upon a subject which has ever appeared to me to be as deeply and awfully mysterious as any within the whole compass of Divine revelation.

The whole of the preceding statements are adapted to show why the atonement which our Lord presented to the Father is mainly ascribed to his final sufferings and death. That these sufferings were heavy beyond all precedent and conception is placed beyond the possibility of doubt; and they were sustained in honour of the Divine law—to evince the rectitude of its precepts, and the equity of its curse—to proclaim that Jehovah is a God of justice, and of truth—and to show, that under his government no sinner can escape with impunity. Though there was not, then, a single act in the Saviour's life which did not tend to make atonement, that tendency was especially apparent in his death. On his cross we see inscribed in letters of blood, "The soul that sinneth shall die."

THE REALITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

The grounds on which our confidence rests, that Christ died with the intention of making atonement for sin, are the following:—

I. The state of mind which he displayed in the anticipation, and in the endurance, of those sufferings by which, as we affirm, atonement was especially made. Contemplate him in the garden of Gethsemane, when he had a full view of the awful baptism with which he was about to be baptized. He appears to have been perfectly appalled by the sight. Such was the agony of his spirit, in the prospect of what he was about to undergo, that it forced from him sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground; or, as some imagine, produced a literal exuding of blood through the pores of the skin. If such were the effect of "that agony upon his body, in the open air, at midnight, and when they who were not thus exposed found it necessary to defend themselves against the cold," how intolerable must it have been! Perhaps no person, under the mere apprehension of death, was ever agitated in an equal degree. And now behold him on the cross. Here his agony reached a higher point of intensity. It extorted from him the bitter and piercing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "It marred his visage more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:" and it is supposed by some, that the sun was clothed in darkness, not only as an expression of the Divine displeasure against his foes, but also of respect for the sufferer,—to veil the ravages which mental distress had committed upon a countenance, and a form, once adorned by more than human beauty. Now compare the state of mind which our Lord displayed in the prospect and under the pressure of these sufferings, with the conduct of some who followed him in the path of affliction,—with that of Paul, in the view of a painful and ignominious death. "And now," said the latter, "behold, I go bound in spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts xx. 22.)

Compare it, further, with the composure of Stephen, when suffering the agonies of a violent death. "They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge: and when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts vii. 59, 60.) Compare it, again, with that of multitudes of the martyrs who stood unmoved under all the cruelties which were inflicted upon them, who uttered no complaint, and died without a groan!

How is this manifest difference to be explained? There appear to me to be only two methods of accounting for it. We must suppose, either, that the sufferings of our Lord were, on one account or another, more dreadful than any which have been experienced by his disciples; or that, in point of fortitude, and strength of mind, he who came to exhibit what we should be in spirit and in conduct, might have derived an example from some of his followers!

The latter of these suppositions is too bold and blasphemous to be avowed, I believe, by any. It cannot be imagined with decency, that Christ, who exhorted his disciples not to fear those who could kill the body only, would be thus pre-eminently agitated by the prospect, or even by the endurance, of a measure of suffering which certainly did not surpass what has, *at least, occasionally*, fallen to the lot of man. We are driven, then, upon the other part of the dilemma; and constrained to suppose that the sufferings of our Lord must have been, on some account or another, dreadful beyond conception. And yet, if we shut out of our consideration that agony of spirit which was sustained by him, as we suppose, in consequence of his standing in the place of the guilty, what ground is there for the opinion that they can have been more than ordinarily dreadful? "The bodily sufferings of Christ," says Dwight, "were not more severe, or even so severe, as those which have been experienced by many others.

The death of the cross was undoubtedly a very distressing death. But it was probably less distressing than that experienced by many of the martyrs. Some of them were roasted by a slow fire—some were dislocated on the rack, and suffered to expire under long-continued torture. Some had their flesh taken off piece by piece, in a very gradual manner, with red-hot pincers. Others expired under various other kinds of exquisite sufferings, devised by the utmost ingenuity of man, and protracted with the utmost cruelty. Multitudes, also, both of martyrs and others, have died on the cross itself, and, for ought that appears, with bodily anguish not inferior to that which Christ himself endured." Now, if the bodily anguish of the Saviour was not more severe than that which has been endured by others, the entire amount of his sufferings, on the principles of those who consider Christ a mere man, and deny the doctrine of the atonement, cannot have been greater. There is, on their scheme, absolutely no room for the supposition of greater sufferings, if bodily anguish did not render them so. And, as that has been shown not to be the case, we are driven back again to that side of the dilemma from which we were glad to escape a short time ago. We must impute defective firmness to him who is the bright example of every Christian excellence! This is really done by the Unitarian system. It libels the Son of God. It represents him as dying with a view to exhibit the manner in which a martyr should suffer, and yet as sinking, and in this precise point too, below the virtues of those who were commanded in all respects to be conformed to his example! Were there no other argument against the Unitarian view of the death of Christ, this would, I acknowledge, be sufficient for me. I dare not thus degrade the Saviour. Let us for a moment consider, on the contrary, how completely every thing is explained on the system adopted by us. That state of mind, on the part of our blessed Lord, to which we have just referred, resulted "not from want of resignation to the will of God, for no other person was ever so resigned; nor from the want of fortitude, for no other person ever possessed it in an equal degree; nor from more acute bodily pain, for anguish of this kind, as

severe, has been sustained by many. It resulted from more intense mental suffering,—from the burden of our guilt, which rested upon him,—from that light of his Father's countenance which then suffered a total eclipse, and led him to cry, 'My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.' " (Psalm lxxxviii. 4—7.)

LECTURE XII.

ATONEMENT.

THE REALITY AND EFFICACY OF THE ATONEMENT.

II. IN support of the reality of the atonement, we adduce the direct testimony of the word of God. The proofs which meet our view are abundant, but the classification of them is not so easy. After considerable thought, I am led to adopt the following:—

1st. I refer to those texts which represent Christ as bearing the sins of men. “Surely,” saith Isaiah, “he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. The Lord hath laid,” or made to meet, “on him the iniquity of us all. He bare the sin of many.” (Isaiah liii. 4, 6, 12.) “Who himself,” says the apostle, “bare our sins in his own body on the cross.” Now the question is, what is meant by bearing sin? We understand the words in the sense of enduring the consequences of sin. This we maintain to be the ordinary and current acceptance of the phrase. “If a man will act improperly, he must bear his offences;” we are in the habit of saying. The expression is manifestly elliptical; it evidently means he must bear the punishment, or the consequences, of his offences. This is, also, beyond all question, the scriptural sense of the words, “Yet ye say, Why doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father,” that is, not die instead of the father; “neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son,”—not die instead of the son; “the righ-

teousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him;" i. e., each must bear the consequences of his own conduct. (Ezekiel xviii. 19, 20.)

In the book of Leviticus the expression frequently occurs—and occurs where its meaning cannot be misunderstood. Thus of the guilty party, in the case of uncleanness, referred to in the 20th chapter, 17th verse, it is said, "he shall bear his iniquity," i. e., endure the punishment of his crime. Thus, also, we read, Numb. xiv. 33, 34, "And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye reached the land, even forty days, (each day for a year,) shall ye bear your iniquities;" that is, endure the consequences of your misconduct.

By the editors of the improved version we are, however, assured that the meaning of the apostle, in the phrase, "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree," is, that he removed them, and carried them away; as he is said, they allege, Matt. vii. 17, to bear our sicknesses, when he healed them by his miraculous power.

I reply, first—that, granting that they do not misinterpret the language of the evangelist Matthew, it cannot be in this sense that our Lord is said to have borne our sins, by Peter. In the sense of suffering the punishment of our sins, he may, with great propriety, be said to have borne them in his own body on the tree. But what meaning can be attached to the Socinian exposition of the words? How could he, according to their system, "remove and carry away our sins, in his *own body on the tree*?" Their hypothesis does not admit of the supposition that the death of Christ was intended to remove guilt,—to procure our pardon. It precludes the notion of any carrying away of sin, but that which consists in the removal of depravity. Now, can any thing be more manifest than that Christ did not *thus* remove, and carry away the sin of any, in his *own body on the tree*? He does it by the power of his word and Spirit. Unless the doctrine of atonement be admitted, the language of the apostle is utterly unmeaning. I answer—

Secondly, that there is reason to think they have misunderstood the language of Matthew, in the passage to which they refer. On examining the words of the prophet, it appears quite manifest that the expressions, "He bore our griefs—carried our sorrows—was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," are intended to convey the same meaning. "He was a man of sorrows," says the prophet; and we thought, such is the implication of his language, that these sorrows were his *own* sorrows—that they had been laid upon him by the hand of God, as the consequence of his *own* sin. But we were mistaken,—they were *our* sorrows which were borne by him; for, "he was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities." The punishment which he endured—if it be right to call it punishment—was the punishment due to *our* sins, not his own. When, therefore, the evangelist Matthew, having described his miracles, says, "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;" we must, to be consistent with the prophet, understand his meaning to be—that these bodily diseases—the consequences of sin—were removed by omnipotent power, put forth on the ground of the atonement. The effect was made to cease, by the removal of the cause. The sacrifice of our Lord is of sufficient worth and efficacy to rescue us from all the consequences of sin—bodily, mental, and eternal. Had not he been about to present that sacrifice, he would not have healed the sick who applied to him; and hence the healing of diseases is called, in Scripture, "the forgiveness of sins." (Matt. ix. 2.)

2nd. I refer to those passages in which Christ is said to have died for our sins. Isaiah declares, "that he was wounded for our transgressions." The apostle affirms that "he was delivered for our offences;" "died for our sins;" "died for us;" "suffered for sins." All these expressions suggest very naturally "the notion of a substitution, in which the sufferings and death of one person are instead of the sufferings and death which the sins of others deserved." The prepositions used in the above passages are *υπερ*, *δια*, *περι*, *αυτη*.

All of them are employed by classical writers to denote substitution; and, without pretending to say that they are never used in a loose sense—in the general sense of advantage—we may affirm with confidence that the notion of substitution, or that Christ suffered, strictly speaking, *instead* of the guilty, “could not have been more naturally and significantly expressed than by these prepositions; and that the meaning which a reader, whose mind is unwarpd by system, feels himself disposed to affix to them, and the violent interpretations which are necessary, in order to evade that meaning, create a strong presumption in favour of the orthodox interpretation.” Let any one read Rom. v. 6, 8, and then say how the idea that the substitution of Christ is intended to be expressed, can be avoided. “For scarcely for,” that is, instead of, “a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for,” that is, instead of, “a good man, some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for,” that is, instead of, “us;”—so as that we, believing in him, might not die.

3rd. I refer to those passages in which Christ is spoken of as a propitiation for sin. God sent his Son “to be the propitiation for our sins.” “And he is the propitiation for our sins.” “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” (Vide 1 John iv. 10; ii. 2; Rom. iii. 24.) To propitiate an individual is to turn away his anger; to recover his forfeited favour. A propitiation is that by which his friendship is regained. If, then, the doctrine of atonement be excluded from our system, in what possible sense can this term be applied to our Lord? He must have propitiated either God or man, or he could not have been denominated, as he is, a “propitiation.” Now, that he did not propitiate man, or the world, is manifest from the fact that the major part of the world’s population is not, even yet, propitiated. Besides, he is said to be a propitiation for our *sins*,—an expression which decidedly proves that the anger removed is not our anger against God, but God’s anger against us. He suffered on *account* of our sins. Moreover, this propitiation was effected by the death of Christ. “He hath recon-

ciled us unto God by his blood." This reconciliation could not, then, be the removal of our enmity against God, for this remained after the death of Christ, and is subdued by "the ministry of reconciliation." Christ was a propitiation for sin by rendering the pardon of sin consistent with the perfections, and safe to the government, of God.

4th. I refer to those passages in which Christ is represented as a ransom for mankind,—“Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” “Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6.) The word in Matthew is *λυτρον*, which signifies the price paid for the deliverance of a captive from slavery or death; to which, among the ancients, a captive was, or might be, condemned. The word in Timothy is *αντιλυτρον*; which denoted the ransom paid for the life of a captive, by giving up the life of another person. The *λυτρον* might be a sum of money; the *αντιλυτρον* was life for life. The *λυτρον* mentioned by our Lord, is the same with *αντιλυτρον*. He gave his life a *λυτρον* for us. “I know not,” says an excellent writer, “how the fact that Christ made an atonement could have been declared in more explicit or more forcible language.”

5th. I refer to those passages in which reconciliation and peace with God are represented as the result of the death of Christ. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ.” It pleased the Father, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself,” &c. (Vide Rom. v. 10; 2 Cor. v. 18; Col. i. 19, 20.)

It has been well and justly remarked by a late writer, that the amount of these expressions is contained in the declaration concerning Christ,—“That we are saved from wrath by him.” The nature of this wrath has been explained; it is, the punitive or retributive justice of God,—that necessity under which the moral Governor is laid to inflict the vengeance of the law upon all who break it. This wrath has

been manifested in the conduct of God. Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth as an example of it, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." From this wrath the atonement of Christ rescues his people. The Saviour has "made peace through the blood of his cross." He has rendered it possible for God to save the transgressor, without destroying the efficiency of his law, and endangering the safety of his government; and, therefore, through him is preached unto all men the forgiveness of sins.

The Unitarians endeavour to evade this argument in support of the doctrine of the atonement, by maintaining that the reconciliation which we ascribe to the death of Christ, is not that of God to man, but of man to God;—that the sufferings of Christ could produce no change in God—that he needed not to be reconciled, because he was never at enmity with man. I answer, first, that the passages to which we have just referred, as well as others, (vide Heb. x. 28, 30, &c.,) in which the wrath of God is expressly affirmed,—and, indeed, the whole of the previous statements, prove most decidedly that, in the sense formerly explained, God did need to be reconciled to man; and that reconciliation in this sense was actually effected by the death of Christ. I answer,

Secondly, With Hammond and others, that the words translated "reconcile," have a peculiar sense in the New Testament: that, whereas, in ordinary Greek writers, they signify "to be pacified," and so reconciled; here, on the other hand, they have the force of the *Hithpael* among the Hebrews. They imply, to reconcile oneself to another; that is, to appease or to obtain the favour of that other. In proof of this, the following passages may be referred to:—"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, &c. (Matt. v. 23, 24.) In this case, the person addressed is not supposed to have any ground of offence against his brother; but to recollect that his brother has ground of offence against him. His brother is, in short, the aggrieved party. Yet the language is, "Be reconciled to thy brother;" that is, make peace with thy

brother; remove his displeasure against thee by becoming acknowledgment and submission; in this manner restore the exercise of mutual affection.—Again,—“And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him, and said, &c.—Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us; for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?” (Vide 1 Sam. xxix. 4.)

Now as Saul, David's master, was the offended party, and David the offender, the latter could not reconcile himself to the former by foregoing his own displeasure, but by removing that of his master. The reconciliation which the lords of the Philistines dreaded, was the appeasing of Saul's anger against David. These instances are completely decisive as to that use of the term for which we contend. When sinners are accordingly said to be reconciled to God, the expression means not the relinquishment of their enmity against him, but the turning away of his displeasure against them. This is further manifest from 2 Cor. v. 18, 21, Rom. v. 10. In the former of these passages, God's “reconciling the world to himself by Jesus Christ,” is explained by his not imputing their trespasses unto them: i. e., by forgiveness he brings sinners into a state of favour and acceptance with himself. As to the latter passage, its connexion with the preceding verse is sufficient to show that the meaning of being reconciled, is there the same;—“much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” If reconciliation to God by the death of his Son is not used here as inclusive, at least, of being justified by his blood, there is neither continuity nor conclusiveness in the apostle's reasoning.

6th. I refer to those passages in which ‘redemption is ascribed to the death of Christ. Vide Ephes. i. 7, “In whom we have redemption through his blood:” Rev. v. 9, “Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood:” Gal. iii. 13, “Christ

hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us." The original terms are properly applied to the action of setting a captive free by the payment of a ransom. In these passages, the sufferings of Christ are accordingly exhibited "under the particular view of a price, by the payment of which we are set free."

To these statements the Socinians object, that the term *redeem* cannot be used in its literal sense when applied to the death of Christ; for as we were the slaves of Satan, the word *redeem*, literally understood, would imply that the price of redemption was paid to Satan. We must, therefore, they add, understand it in the secondary and derivative sense of deliverance; in which sense it is frequently used in the word of God; as, for instance, when God is said to redeem his people from trouble, from danger, death, &c., though no price is supposed to have been given. Christ redeems us by delivering us, through the influence of the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, from the love and practice of sin.

We reply, that we do not deny that the word has acquired this secondary and derivative sense; nor, "that it is the business of sound criticism to determine, by considering the circumstances of the case, how far the primary signification is to be retained, or with what qualifications it is to be understood, in every particular application." But we maintain, that, on the following grounds, it must not be understood in the derivative sense when used in connexion with the death of Christ.

First, "It is not necessary," says Principal Hill, "to depart from its literal meaning. Those whom Christ redeems were exposed to a sentence of condemnation, they were in the condition of prisoners waiting for the execution of the sentence—and the death of Christ rescues them from this awful state. Deliverance from the dominion of sin, and the power of Satan, is a secondary effect, a consequence of the application of the remedy; redemption of our bodies from the grave is another effect, still more remote. Both are mentioned in Scripture; but the immediate effect of the death of Christ is our deliverance from punishment, what the apostle calls the curse of the law; and this punishment being in the

power of the lawgiver, by whom it was to be inflicted, the ransom, in consideration of which it is remitted, and the condemned are set free, may be said to be given to him.

“Secondly, Although a captive may be released without any ransom, and although *λυω*, a verb derived from *λυτρον*, may be employed most naturally to express such gratuitous release, yet this extension of the primary meaning of these words is excluded from the case to which they are applied in the New Testament, because a *λυτρον* is there expressly mentioned. When a Greek author, in relating the release of a prisoner, speaks repeatedly of *αποινα* or *λυτρα*, as Homer does in the first book of the Iliad, it cannot be supposed that the redemption was without price. Every one feels this effect of introducing the noun *λυτρον* when the captive was detained by force under the power of an enemy; and the significancy of the noun is not in the least diminished, when the prisoner is released from a captivity which the Scriptures represent as judicial. The *λυτρον*, indeed, in that case, is not a price from which the lawgiver is to receive any advantage; it is the satisfaction to justice upon which he consents to remit the sentence; but still the mention of a *λυτρον* is absolutely inconsistent with a gratuitous remission.

“Thirdly, The Septuagint has used the word *λυτρον*, to denote the consideration upon which a judicial sentence was remitted. There was the *λυτρα ψυχης*, Exod. xxx. 12—16, called, in our translation, the atonement money; half a shekel given for the service of the sanctuary, by every one who was numbered, upon all occasions when the number of the people was taken, ‘that there might be no plague among them.’ Here, then, is *λυτρον*; which is known to denote, in classical language, a ransom paid in order to procure the release of a captive, applied in the Septuagint, by a most natural extension of meaning, to the consideration given for deliverance from death; an evil which the person so delivered could in no other way have escaped, any more than the captive could have recovered his liberty without the ransom; and the same idea is followed out in the New Testament.” We are said, Gal. iii. 13, to have been redeemed from the curse of the law; in Rev. v. 9,

to have been redeemed unto God by the blood of Christ. Here the evil from which we are said to be redeemed, is a judicial sentence of death; the *λυτρον* is declared to be the blood of Christ. If atonement be not taught here, it surely cannot be taught at all.

7th. Those passages which connect remission of sins with the death of Christ: Eph. i. 7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," &c.: 1 John i. 7, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin:" Rev. i. 5, "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." This connexion of forgiveness with the blood or death of Christ, refutes an objection which might otherwise have been derived from the extended application of the words *αφιημι* and *αφεσις*. They may be applied to the free remission of a debt, and, indeed, are so applied; so that if the gospel merely testified concerning the remission of sins, it might possibly have been said that that remission did not result from any thing done by Christ. The texts, however, to which I have now referred preclude this objection. "Be it known unto you," said the apostle, "that through this man," through the means of this man, "is preached unto you the remission of sins;" and the means employed by him are stated in the passage of which we have been just speaking,—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;" and especially the one in Ephesians, in which the remission of sins is introduced as an explanation of that redemption, or release from the sentence of the law, which was purchased by the blood of Christ, and both are ascribed to the riches of the grace of God. "It is plain, therefore," says the writer last quoted, "that to the writers of the New Testament there did not appear any inconsistency between the forgiveness of sins, and the laying of the punishment of them upon another; and by declaring the intimate connexion between these two, they give their sanction to that leading principle in the statement of the catholic opinion which distinguishes the act of a lawgiver who, in forgiving sins, has respect to the authority of the law, from the account

of a creditor who, in remitting a debt, disposes of his property at his pleasure."

The texts to which we have now referred, explain a class of passages which are abundant in the word of God,—those, namely, which direct that all our supplications to God be presented in the name of Christ; and that all the blessings we implore and need, are bestowed upon us for his sake. "Whatsoever," said Christ, "ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (John xvi. 23; xiv. 13, 14; Col. iii. 17; Acts xiii. 38.) "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." (1 John ii. 12; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Eph. iv. 32.) These passages imply, on the one hand, our utter unworthiness; on the other hand, that some part of the Redeemer's conduct is so acceptable in the sight of his Father, as to be rewarded with the forgiveness of all for whom he intercedes; and the texts to which we formerly referred direct us to his death as that act on which, above all others, the Great Eternal dwells with ineffable complacency: "We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

III. I argue the reality of the atonement from the nature and design of ancient sacrifices. Many, at least, of those which were offered amongst the Jews, are declared by infallible authority to have been types of the sacrifice of Christ. We derive from them, then, independent proof of the reality of his atonement—proof which is proportioned to the degree of evidence we have that they were sacrifices of expiation, and not of mere acknowledgment. In support of the important fact that they were of the former character, I produce those passages, and there are more than thirty of this kind, in which the blood of the sacrifices is said to make atonement for those who offered it; especially that remarkable language in reference to blood in general, contained in Lev. xvii. 10, 11, "I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people; for the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the

altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The blood made an atonement because it contained the life of the animal, which life was considered a substitute for the life of the transgressor. This will most evidently appear, if we consider what took place when a sin-offering for an individual was presented. The worshipper, conscious of guilt, brought an animal, his own property, to the door of the tabernacle. He laid his hands upon the head of the animal; he afterwards slew it with his own hand; then delivered it to the priests, who burned the fat and a part of the animal upon the altar, and having employed part of the blood in sprinkling the altar, and in some cases the worshipper, poured all the rest at the bottom of the altar. "And thus," says the law, "the priest shall make an atonement for him, as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him."

This will, also, more especially appear when we call to mind the solemnities of the great day of atonement. Upon that day the high priest first presented a bullock as a sin-offering for himself and his house; took of the congregation two goats, upon which he cast lots, and the lots determined which of the two should be offered, and which should be sent away alive. There being no individual for whom the first was peculiarly offered, the high priest himself presented and slew it; and then he took the blood, both of the bullock and of the goat, and carried the blood into the holy of holies, the inmost recess of the temple, where stood the mercy-seat, the conceived residence of the God of Israel, and distinguished by the Shekinah, or cloud of glory, the visible symbol of the Divine Presence. Into this holy place no other person ever entered, and the high priest only on the day of atonement. The blood which he carried with him he sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, and then came out and sprinkled it, as usual, upon the altar. Having thus, by the blood of one goat, reconciled the holy place and the tabernacle, he laid both his hands upon the head of the other goat, called the scape-goat, and "confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting

them upon the head of the goat, and sent him away, thus bearing their iniquities, into the wilderness." Now, if any one can persuade himself that these were not sacrifices of expiation,—that there was no symbolical transference of the guilt of the transgressor to the victim,—and that the life of the transgressor was not considered as taken away when the life of the victim was taken, I confess I should think it hopeless to attempt to reason with him.

Much has been said and written in reference to the origin of sacrifices. I do not intend to enter upon the investigation, because it does not appear to me that the decision of the question has so much practical bearing upon the doctrine of the atonement, as has been sometimes imagined. I have no doubt myself that they were originally of Divine appointment,—the language of the apostle, in reference to the sacrifice of Abel is, to my mind, conclusive evidence of this,—and that the sacrifices of the heathen world generally are corruptions of a divinely appointed rite. But the point, as it appears to me, which it is of the greatest importance to ascertain, is the object with which they were presented—whether they were offerings of mere acknowledgment, or of expiation. And I cannot but regard it as a fact, too well established to be denied by any one who pays the least regard to candour and consistency, that in many, at least, of the heathen sacrifices, the people understood that the victim was substituted in place of the offerer, and suffered the punishment which the offerer deserved. I cannot imagine how it can be denied that the anger of the gods was supposed to be averted by these sacrifices. Recollecting this, it must be a matter of subordinate importance to be able to prove that sacrifices were originally of Divine appointment. It has never been doubted, by any who receive the Scriptures, that the Jewish sacrifices were so. Every circumstance in relation to the quality of the victims, the purpose and manner of offering them, was regulated by the express appointment of Heaven. Now if it were even granted—which, however, I am far from doing—that the Divine origin of sacrifices could not be satisfactorily evinced; if it were further conceded, even, that the right of sacrifice

was engrafted into the Mosaic institutions, in consequence of Jewish predilections—predilections growing out of the universality of the practice in other parts of the world—it should be especially observed, that it would not overturn the argument for the reality of the atonement, which we have derived from ancient sacrifices. The case would stand thus;—a rite which had been practised in idolatrous worship, was transferred by Divine authority (whether it is reasonable to suppose that this was the case, is a question with which we have now no concern) to the worship of the true God. Amongst the heathen, as we have seen, it was a rite of expiation. The animal was offered, in the words of Livy, *pacem exposcere deum*. When engrafted, then, into the Mosaic institute, the Jews, on the supposition now made, must necessarily have misunderstood it, if, under that institution, it partook of any other character than that of a rite of expiation—the light in which, when contemplating the accounts which are given of it, we are constrained to view it. When we speak of the Jewish sacrifices as expiatory, the language must of course be understood in a manner consistent with the imperfection of that dispensation. “The law made nothing perfect;” it could not purge the conscience from dead works. “It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” But their design was to shadow forth the great atonement. They were typical expiations of sin, and were adapted to carry forwards the views and hopes of the worshippers to Him who was to “appear in the end of the world,” to take away sin really, and completely, and finally, “by the sacrifice of himself.”

THE EFFICACY OF THE ATONEMENT.

In the course of our previous investigations we have seen that there were obstacles, resulting from the character and government of Jehovah, to the bestowment of pardon upon transgressors; that the atonement of Christ was designed to remove these obstacles, and thus to open a channel through which the Great Eternal might honourably cause the riches of his mercy to flow to men, under the direction of that perfect wisdom which characterizes all his conduct, as the moral

Governor of the universe. Now, the question—and it is one of infinite importance to us as transgressors, is—were these obstacles removed by the Son of God—is there sufficient reason to think that, when he uttered the words on the cross, “It is finished,” he had done all that was necessary to render the bestowment of mercy consistent with the honour of the Divine character, and the safety of the Divine government? To this question I answer in the affirmative, on the following grounds:—

1st. The dignity of his person affords ground, I think I may say, of certainty, that this is the case. He was, as we have seen, “God manifest in the flesh.” His grand intention in becoming incarnate was to make atonement for sin; he laid down his life as a sacrifice of expiation. Can we then possibly suppose that he failed in his attempt—that he left unaccomplished, or only partially accomplished, the work which he undertook? Had the Saviour been less than infinitely wise, and infinitely powerful, the mere fact of his having died with the intention of making atonement, would not have proved that it was efficacious; but a Being so mysteriously constituted as the Redeemer of fallen man, could not die in vain.

2nd. A consideration of the important truths and facts, which were exhibited by the death of Christ, is adapted to assure us that there was a plenitude of efficacy in his atonement to secure the purposes for which it was presented to God.

It exhibited the excellence of the Divine law. Sin is a practical denial of its rectitude and goodness. Had its sanctions been inflicted upon transgressors themselves, that act would have been a practical vindication of its claims, and its worth. The doctrine of atonement represents the punishment of disobedience as having been sustained by the surety of transgressors. Thus the law was honoured; the rectitude of its precepts, and the justice of its penalty, were proved, and practically proclaimed. Nay, in consequence of the dignity and glory of the surety, all these things were placed in a far more vivid and impressive point of view, than if the vengeance due to the ungodly had fallen upon the sinners themselves.

It manifested the holiness of God. On many occasions has Jehovah displayed his hatred against sin. The destruction of the old world—the fire and brimstone that laid waste the cities of the plain—the calamities and captivities of the Jews, are striking indications of the essential purity of the Divine character. But we must ascend to Calvary to witness the most vivid, as well as the most unequivocal display of this perfection. We must see the man who was God's fellow—a being who, personally considered, was spotless; who was not himself a sinner, but merely stood in the place of the transgressor—stricken, smitten of God and afflicted,—we must see the rocks rending, and the graves opening, and the dead arising, in token of the unparalleled nature of the transaction, to form any thing like an adequate idea of the Divine abhorrence of sin. In the cross of Christ we see the Father hiding his face from his Son—his own Son, his only begotten Son, when bearing by imputation only the guilt of men, though himself uncontaminated by depravity! How unutterably opposed must, then, be the nature of God to all species and degrees of moral defilement!

It manifests the justice of God, or his wise and merciful determination to render to all the subjects of his government exactly according to their due. What sinner can hope to escape with impunity, when he recollects that even the surety of the guilty—a Being so inconceivably dear to the Father, had to endure the curse of the law? “If such things were done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry?”

It manifests, finally, the truth of God: for though a Saviour was not provided for by law, the provision of one was not contrary, at least, to the spirit and intention of the law. The penalty of transgression was paid by our substitute, though not by us; and thus the credit and efficiency of the law were preserved. All these considerations are adapted to show that the atonement of Christ must possess efficiency. It sustained the moral government, while pardon was bestowed upon the guilty, i. e., it was efficacious.

3rd. The recollection that the atonement was the performance, on the part of Christ, of that work which the Father

had promised to reward with the most signal honour, may suffice to satisfy us in reference to its efficacy. In Isaiah liii. 10—12, we read as follows, according to Bishop Lowth's rendering of the passage:—"If his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice, he shall see his seed which shall prolong their days; and the gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hands. Of the travail of his soul he shall see, i. e., the fruit, and be satisfied; by the knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many; for the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear. Therefore will I distribute to him the many for his portion; and the mighty people shall he share for his spoil; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Now, our Lord did make his soul a propitiatory sacrifice. He performed fully his part in the great work of human redemption. "He was faithful to him that appointed him," says the apostle, "even as Moses was faithful in all his house." And shall he not then receive his reward? As the great Captain of salvation, shall he not be permitted to lead many sons to glory, for the joy of doing which he despised the shame, and endured the cross? How can it be doubted?

4th. The direct declarations of the inspired volume are such as to leave no doubt of the efficacy of the atonement: Isa. liii. 5, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Again, ver. 10—12, Rom. v. 8—10, "God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Eph. i. 6, 7, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Col. i. 19, 20, "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell. And, having

made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Heb. ix. 11—14.)

5th. The resurrection of Christ demonstrates the efficacy of his atonement. The load of our guilt sunk him to the dust of death. How, then, could he have risen again, had not that guilt been cancelled by his death? If the tomb had held him as its prisoner, it must have been because he was foiled in his attempt to effect our release. Hence the apostle, writing to the Corinthians, says, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain; your faith is also vain, ye are yet in your sins;" i. e., under the guilt and power of sin. And he adds, that if this be the case, then "they who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." But this is not the case. The Redeemer could not be holden of death. He threw open the gates of the grave. He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures; and thereby proved, by resistless power of evidence, that he had "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." It is of importance to observe here, that the evidence afforded by the resurrection of Christ in support of the efficacy of his atonement, is strengthened by the consideration that the power of the Father was exerted in effecting it. "The God of your fathers," said Peter to the high-priests, "raised up Jesus." "God raised him from the dead, and gave him glory." Now, is it conceivable, let me ask, that such would have been the conduct of the Father, if the atonement of the Son had been insufficient, and inefficacious? Would he have thus honoured the surety, if the surety had not honoured the law? Would he have exalted him, as the reward of his work, if that work had been inadequately performed? Would he have given the sinner's surety this full and complete discharge, if the surety had not paid the sinner's debt? It cannot be conceived of for a moment. No proof can be more conclusive than the one now contemplated, that the atonement of Christ is possessed of infinite efficacy; we may adopt, accordingly, the triumphant language of the apostle, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

LECTURE XIII.

ATONEMENT.

THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

I NEED not say that no point of Scripture doctrine has given rise to more disputes than the subject on the consideration of which we are about to enter. On the one hand, it has been asserted, that the love of God in the gift of his Son had for its objects only the elect, that Christ gave himself for them exclusively,—that in no sense has he made atonement for others; and that, consequently, none but the elect either will, or can, partake of those spiritual and everlasting blessings which flow from what he has done. On the other hand, it is contended, that God loved the whole world,—that Christ made an atonement for the whole world; and that if any are not saved by him, it is because they do not comply with the conditions on which the actual enjoyment of the blessings purchased by him for all men is suspended. Now, if it were not almost presumption to express such an opinion in reference to a point on which men of the greatest talents and learning, and, I may add, piety too, are to be found in a hostile attitude, I should say that things have been advanced by both parties in the controversy which it will be difficult to reconcile with the word of God. It is not uncommon in controversy for both of the parties engaged, regarding each other's sentiments as dangerous, to recede in some measure from the doctrine of Scripture, in their mutual desire to avoid what they regard as contrary to it. They fix their thoughts too exclusively upon the conceived error; their minds are thus partially withdrawn from the standard of truth; and they depart

in some degree, by almost necessary consequence, from the truth itself. The remarks which I have to make upon this subject will perhaps be best presented in the form of a series of propositions, beginning with those which are less disputable, and proceeding to others which will serve more fully to exhibit the doctrine of Scripture in reference to it.

1st. The sacred writers invite all men to come to Christ, and to secure, by that act, those blessings which flow to sinners through the channel of his atonement. In the support of this proposition I need not enlarge. Is. lv. 1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Come unto me," said our Lord, "all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) The attempts of certain individuals to show that these are not indiscriminate invitations—that they are addressed to certain characters, or to individuals in certain states of mind, exclusively, and so afford no warrant to others to make application to the Saviour for the blessings of redemption, are so directly opposed to every just principle of interpretation, that I do not feel called upon to spend one moment of time in exhibiting their fallacy. It is only necessary to say that the language is in exact agreement with the manner in which indefinite, unlimited invitations, to become possessed of any blessing, are, in the every day intercourse of life, addressed to men; all who choose, or will, may go and receive it.

2nd. A refusal to go to Christ, and so to receive the blessings of his salvation, is the ground upon which censure is passed upon sinners *now*, and it will constitute the foundation, or cause, of their condemnation *hereafter*. John iii. 18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not *is condemned already*, because he hath not believed on the only-begotten Son of God:" ver. 26, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;

but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." In harmony with these general statements, we find our Lord strongly censuring the Jews for not believing on him, (John v. 39, 43: vide also chapter xv. 22. 24,)—upbraiding the cities where most of his mighty works were done, (Matt. xi. 20. 24,)—weeping over Jerusalem, (Matt. xxiii. 37,) and saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! behold, your house is left unto you desolate." *The same conduct, on the part of sinners, will constitute the ground of condemnation hereafter.* This assertion assumes that all will not be ultimately saved by Christ,—a fact of important practical bearing upon our subsequent remarks, and supported by the testimony of experience, and Scripture. How often do we see men terminating a course of rebellion against God in a manner worthy of the flagitiousness of their lives,—dying as the fool dieth,—entering with the utmost degree of unconcern into the presence of Him who has declared that he will render unto all men according to their works! And, if we believe the testimony of Scripture, we can entertain no hope in reference to their eternal state. They must be "cast into hell, with all the nations that forget God;" and the cause of their destruction will prove to be their rejection of offered mercy. John iii. 19, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness, rather than light, because their deeds were evil." In harmony with this declaration of our Lord, the apostle assures us, (2 Thess. i. 7. 9,) that, at the last day, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." From these propositions it seems to me to follow as a necessary consequence, and which I state as the

3rd Proposition, that while, on the one hand, the Saviour cannot have intended to secure the salvation of all men by the act of offering up himself a sacrifice for sin,—yet that

that sacrifice must, on the other hand, have been in itself adequate to the salvation of all men, so as to become a suitable foundation for the general and unlimited calls of the gospel. There is a broad line of distinction between the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ, and its efficiency; or rather, as I would say, the sovereign purpose of the sacred Three in reference to its efficiency; i. e., in reference to the exertion of that holy influence upon the minds of men which secures to them the enjoyment of the blessings which flow through the channel of the atonement. It may be true (whether it is so, or not, we shall inquire presently,—my present object is merely to illustrate the difference between the two things) that Jehovah did not intend to put forth that influence which would render the atonement the means of securing the salvation of all men; though, as it was to become the basis of moral government, it was essential that it should be one of infinite worth, and so in itself adequate to the salvation of all men. This I have long regarded as the true state of the case. I cannot think that the intention of God in reference to the application of the atonement (as we call it, perhaps not very correctly, though the language is well enough understood) was general, nor that the sufficiency of the atonement—its inherent power, worth, adequacy, &c., was limited, or particular.

Before we can return an enlightened, or even a rational, answer to the question, “Did Christ die *for all* men, or *for some* men only?” we must carefully inquire into its meaning,—a business attended with more difficulty than some individuals imagine. If it be meant to inquire whether Christ died *instead* of some men, or *instead* of all men, it will be still necessary (though the question is now less ambiguous) more fully to define the phraseology; for, on the one hand, he did not *so* die *instead* of any, as that they shall be saved without repentance and faith; and, on the other hand, he *so* died *instead* of all men, as that all men may be saved on their faith and repentance.

If, again, it be meant to inquire whether Christ died with a *design* to save some men, or all men, it is possible that even this question might be regarded by some persons as an ambi-

guous one. To save, it might be said, may mean to lay for men a foundation of salvation, i. e., to supply them with the means of salvation;—or again, to render those means effectual to their salvation: and, accordingly, the answer to the question must vary, as one or other of these senses is attached to the words. If the question be, “Did Christ die with the design of laying a foundation of salvation for *all* men, or for *some* men?” I answer, that, in this sense, he died for all men. If the question be, “Did he die with the design of rendering these means effectual to the salvation of *all* men, or of *some* men?” I answer, that, in this sense, he died for *some* men only.

I believe in the unlimited, universal, infinite sufficiency of the atonement of Christ—I believe it was the intention of God, *as the moral Governor*, in giving his Son as a sacrifice for sin, (and we must not forget that, while men remain rational beings, it is impossible for God to divest himself of the character of moral Governor, even under a dispensation of grace,) to provide a remedy commensurate with the disease. I believe, on the other hand, in the limited application of the atonement. I believe it was the intention of God, *as a Sovereign*, to render that remedy effectual, by special and sovereign influence, in the case of certain individuals *only* who are affected with the general disease, so that the intention of God, as a *Sovereign*, and as a *Ruler*, in reference to the atonement, is different, the one being general, the other particular.

The truth of the preceding remarks, which have been so far merely expository, it will be necessary to establish. The two points to be supported are the following:—that God, in giving his Son to be a sacrifice for sin, designed, *as a moral Governor*, to provide, and that he actually did provide a remedy co-extensive with the disease of men;—but that, *as a Sovereign*, having a right to dispense his favours as it seems good in his sight, he did not determine to exert that influence which would render the remedy effectual, save only in the case of the elect.

I. The first thing to be proved is, that the atonement is sufficient in itself for all,—that it is a general remedy co-extensive with the evil which it was intended to remove,—

setting open the door of salvation to the whole family of man.

1. I derive my confidence of this from the very nature of the atonement itself. In defining atonement, it was stated to mean that satisfaction for sin which was rendered to God as the moral Governor of the world, by which every obstacle, on his part, to the pardon of sin was entirely removed. In explaining the nature of satisfaction, it was observed, that to make satisfaction for sin is to do that which restores, and will preserve, to the moral government of God, that power over its subjects, which the entrance of sin had shaken, and which its unconditional forgiveness would have entirely destroyed. Now, if this be the nature of atonement, the sacrifice of our Lord must have been in itself sufficient for the salvation of the whole world. To conceive of any limitation in reference to its own intrinsic worth or adequacy, is utterly impossible. To suppose that the death of Christ has removed the obstacles which must otherwise have prevented the salvation of some men, and not those which would have obstructed the salvation of others, is to suppose not only what is unscriptural, but what is absurd. That satisfaction which renders it consistent with the perfections of Jehovah, and with the claims and safety of his government, to bestow pardon upon *one* man, must of necessity render it equally consistent with his character, and his office, to bestow pardon upon all. It does not follow from this statement that pardon will actually be bestowed upon all. Previously to the creation, there was no obstacle resulting from want of right, or power, on the part of God, to the bestowment of reason upon all the animate productions of his hands, yet reason was not imparted to many. There is now, in like manner, no obstacle arising out of the Divine character and government, to the eternal salvation of all men, yet the felicity of heaven will not be imparted to all. There are, doubtless, reasons for this restricted application of the atonement; but these reasons do not rest upon a limited sufficiency in the atonement itself. That there should be such a limitation in an atonement made by a Divine Saviour is impossible,—considering the nature

of his atonement, inconceivable. That work, on the part of the Saviour, which preserves the efficiency of the law in the bestowment of pardon upon one man, must, in the very nature of the case, preserve it also in the bestowment of pardon *upon all men*. It is impossible, consistently, to reject these statements, and, at the same time, to retain the views in reference to the nature of the atonement which have been developed in the preceding Lectures. I express a firm conviction, growing out of six and twenty years of close and anxious thought and observation, that the notions which some have formed of the limited sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, are usually connected with the opinion (and cannot well be otherwise than connected with it,) that he delivers us from punishment by suffering the precise number of stripes which we must have endured.* In that case, indeed, there could be no *sufficiency* in the atonement itself in reference to any but the elect. But if his death partook of the nature of a moral, and not a pecuniary satisfaction, then that satisfaction which was sufficient for one, must have been sufficient for all.

* It is possible that the practice of attaching too literal a signification to such words as head, surety, legal representative, &c., in their application to Christ, has also contributed to sustain this restricted view of the sufficiency of the atonement. If the Saviour were not the surety, or legal representative, of the non-elect, how can there be, some are ready to say, sufficient efficacy in his blood to save them, allowing its value to be as great as you please? Now, I admit that, if the relation sustained by Christ to his people were absolutely identical with that which a human legal representative sustains to those whom he represents, the objection would be an insuperable one. But I deny this. I maintain that it is analogous merely, not identical. The consequences of the work of Christ are, to believers, *as if Christ were their legal representative*; and, therefore, he may be called so; the analogy is rather in the consequences, than in the relation itself. (Vide Lectures on Justification.) But the point which I particularly wish those who urge this objection, to observe now, is, that, if they give up "the measure and weight system," as Dr. Wardlaw expressively calls it, they must with it, also, surrender their notions, that the relation of Christ to his people, identifies itself with that of a legal representative among men. Christ could not, it is manifest, be a literal surety, or legal representative, without enduring the *same punishment*—the same *in kind and degree*—which the elect must have borne. Christ was, in a certain sense, the representative of the world; i. e., in so far as though, without his death, all must have perished, now all may be saved. He is more fully the representative of believers, because the consequences of his work will certainly be enjoyed by them.

In the language of Dwight, "If the atonement of Christ consisted in making such amends for the disobedience of man as should place the law, government, and character of God, in such a light that he could forgive sinners of the human race without any inconsistency, then these amends, or this atonement, were all absolutely necessary, in order to render such forgiveness proper, or consistent with the law and character of God, in a single instance. The forgiveness of one sinner without these amends, would be just as much a contradiction of the declarations of law, as the forgiveness of a million. If, then, the amends actually made were such that God could consistently forgive one sinner, he might, with equal consistency and propriety, forgive any number, unless prevented by any other reason. The atonement, in other words, which was necessary for a world, was equally necessary, and in just the same manner and degree, for an individual sinner." (Sermon 36.) The amount of Dwight's statement is, that Christ could not, according to the phraseology of some, make a sufficient atonement *for* one man, without making a sufficient atonement *for* all men. I do not approve of the phraseology, because it seems to imply an intention, on the part of the Saviour, to apply the atonement to, or to render it effectual in, the case of all men; yet the meaning intended to be conveyed is scriptural, and most important, viz., that the Saviour set open the door of mercy to all, so that all, without a second atonement, may, on their faith and repentance, be forgiven. The conceived implication of the words, "Christ made an atonement *for* all men," to which I have just referred, causes many to startle at the phraseology, and is the chief ground on which I would avoid it; for, believing, as they profess to do, that, if it had been the intention of God to save all men, the atonement which his Son presented would have been sufficient in itself to secure that object, they must believe, to be self-consistent, that this atonement was, in some sense, made for all; or it would follow that some may be saved without an atonement. Strictly speaking, the atonement was not made for one man, or for all men; it was made to God for sin, i. e., on account of sin. It was designed to remove those

obstacles to any gracious communications from God to man, which sin had set up. There was doubtless a speciality of intention in reference to the individuals to whom the highest species of such communications should be made, but the breaking down of the barrier permitted the free access of mercy to every individual of the human family.

2. I ground my confidence that the atonement is in itself sufficient for the salvation of all men ; or, in other words, a general remedy, co-extensive with the evil it was intended to remove, on the consideration that it seems impossible to vindicate the consistency and propriety of those exhortations and threatenings to which we have referred, unless this be the case. All men are invited and commanded to believe in Christ ; it is promised, that all shall be saved who believe ; it is threatened, that all shall be condemned who disbelieve, and condemned *because* they disbelieve. Now, how is it possible, let me ask, to reconcile these facts with the opinion, that there is not inherent sufficiency in the atonement to secure the blessings of salvation to all the world ? How can we justify the propriety of beseeching numbers to be reconciled to God, to whom he has not been reconciled by the death of his Son—of proffering pardon to all men, when the atonement has virtue only to secure the pardon of some—of inviting the whole family of man to the gospel feast, when there is not a sufficiency of provisions for a part of the family ? If such conduct would be mean and dishonourable on the part of man,—and who would venture to say it would not ?—how can we impute it to the Great Eternal ? I lack words to express my astonishment that persons should be found who can give credit to the monstrous proposition, that there are actually no provisions (which must be the case if the sufficiency of the atonement is limited) for multitudes who are, at the same time, invited to partake of them, and damned for rejecting them !

Will it be said that the atonement would have been sufficient for all, if God had determined that all should be saved by it, so that all may be invited to believe, inasmuch as it will be found sufficient for all who actually believe ? I answer, in the

First place, that it is absurd to rest the *sufficiency* of the

atonement upon the Divine purpose in reference to its application. Its tendency to sustain the efficiency of the law, even while there seemed, in the pardon of transgressors, to be a practical denial of its rectitude and goodness, does not depend upon the mere will of God; or a man might have made an ample atonement. It springs out of the reason of the case. The atonement is, indeed, *efficient*, i. e., it becomes the means of actual salvation to certain individuals, because Jehovah determines that it shall be so. But had it not been *sufficient*, independently of Divine volition, to secure the object which it was designed to effect, it could not have been rendered efficient even in the case of one individual. And if it be sufficient in itself, it may be rendered (whether such be the determination of God is another question) efficient in the case of all. But I reply,

Secondly, that, if it were not absurd to rest the sufficiency of the atonement upon the Divine purpose, with regard to its application, yet, as that is done by supposition, and as that purpose is limited, the *sufficiency* of the atonement is, on the principles of my opponents, limited after all. It has no inherent power, as they conceive, to secure the blessings of salvation to any, save to those on whom the Father had previously determined to bestow them. And yet all men to whom the gospel comes, and by Divine appointment it is to be preached to the whole world, are invited, and, indeed, enjoined by God to seek these blessings on the ground of the atonement—are now condemned if they seek them not, and, persisting in their rejection, must bear, and on account of their rejection, the wrath of God throughout eternity!

If, to get rid of this difficulty, it should be said that no sinner knows but that Christ died for him, or does not know but that he is included in the atonement which he has made, and so may justly deserve punishment for not believing on Christ, I answer, that I find it utterly impossible to conceive that the ignorance of the creature should be the basis of the Divine government; or that it is befitting the Divine character to make it the ground of human obligation. On the principles opposed, viz., that there is a limited sufficiency in the atone-

ment of Christ, it is manifest that, if the fact that there are no provisions at the gospel-feast for many were known—and known by these many, they could not be honourably bidden to the supper; far less, condemned for not appearing at it.

3. I ground my confidence that the atonement was a general remedy, co-extensive with the evil it was intended to remove, on the consideration, that the provision of such a remedy was, as far as we can judge, befitting the character of God as the moral Governor of the world. There is, I think, considerable reason to apprehend that too many of our evangelical divines partially forget, that Jehovah retains the character and office of a moral Governor, even under the present dispensation of mercy. At any rate, the sentiment, if it gains admission into their creeds, does not draw after it its legitimate consequences. They view the gospel too much as a system of pure benevolence, accomplishing its entire purpose by securing the salvation of those whom the decree of election had destined to be rescued from the ruins of the fall. When Adam had sunk into apostacy, and involved in the consequences of his transgression the whole of the human family, Jehovah, in pursuance of that sovereign decree to which we have referred, determined, they imagine, to appoint a Saviour specifically and exclusively for them, who should stand in the relation of a substitute and a surety for them; but sustain no relation to that part of the family which was not included within the range of the decree. For the purpose of bringing them to the actual enjoyment of the blessings of salvation, the glad tidings of the Saviour's atonement must be proclaimed to them; and, as they are mingled with the common mass of mankind, and cannot be distinguished from others by any eye but the eye of God, the gospel must be preached generally; its testimony, and promises, and threatenings, must be brought before the view of all men; but then the entire design of this proceeding is merely to bring in the chosen to salvation. No mercy would be offered to others, no gospel would be preached to them, no proffer of salvation through the blood of Christ would be made to them, were it not necessary to secure the intentions of sovereign mercy in reference to the

objects of Jehovah's everlasting love. Now, if I do not call this a radically *mistaken* view of the nature of the present dispensation, I have no doubt that it is a radically *defective* one. It loses sight of the important fact, that though the gospel is the means of conveying distinguishing blessings to many, it is the instrument of moral government to all; According to the statement opposed, it is difficult to see how God can be said to sustain the relation of moral Governor to any. To the elect he bears the relation of the sovereign bestower of unmerited and infinite mercy; to the non-elect, rather the relation of executioner, than of judge, or governor. He is presented by it in the attitude of a being who delays, indeed, the infliction of the penalty incurred by the breach of the Adamic dispensation, for the attainment of an important end, but who offers no escape from it; does not set open the door of mercy to them, has no intention but to inflict the full penalty, and merely reserves them to the day of wrath, when the vengeance of a broken law shall be poured out upon their heads. Now, I cannot but regard these statements as conveying as incorrect a representation of the Divine plans and conduct, as can be given, without a relinquishment of the Scripture doctrine on the subject altogether. It is not true of any, under the gospel dispensation, that they stand in no relation to God but that of criminals, waiting the day of execution, without the possibility of escape. Have we not seen that mercy is offered to all, and that the condemnation of the finally impenitent will rest on their rejection of it? How, then, can we so far libel the Great Eternal, as to suppose that he invites sinners to leave their prison, and will condemn them hereafter for not doing it, if he has not set open the doors to permit their escape? In consistency with the facts of the case, it is imperative upon us to believe that, after the fall, Jehovah set open the door of mercy, not to some men merely, but to all men; whether he determined to impart to all a disposition to avail themselves of this mercy, is another question. And to open a way of escape to all, it was obviously necessary that the sacrifice, on the ground of which any receive pardon, should be in itself sufficient for the salvation of all. Such a

sacrifice was provided; and its provision is highly honourable to the character of Jehovah, if not required by it, as the moral Governor of the world. Contemplate for a moment the relations which existed between God and man after the original transgression. The penalty attached to the first covenant had been incurred; because, in the view of the law, sin had been committed by all. Now, in our Lectures on Divine sovereignty, we admitted the difficulty which attaches to the conception, that any difference should exist in the conduct of God as a moral Governor or Judge, in reference to the various individuals who are involved in the same general sentence of condemnation. We admitted that justice did seem to require that all should be condemned, or all acquitted; but that it seemed to forbid that some should suffer, and others be permitted to escape, without the intervention of another dispensation, under which mercy should be accessible to all, so that their final state might be in accordance with the rule of that dispensation. Now, what was the case, according to those views of the nature and the extent of the atonement which have been developed in our previous Lectures? Do they not manifestly imply that there was no difference in the conduct of God, as a moral Governor, in reference to men? He determined to provide a sacrifice of infinite worth, and, therefore, in itself adequate to the salvation of all, and on the ground of that sacrifice to invite all to apply for pardon and eternal life, and to promise that all who complied with the invitation should enjoy the blessing. This was done partly in his character as a Sovereign, manifesting unmerited mercy—but still the same mercy, to all: and partly as a righteous moral Governor, grounding, indeed, his requirements in sovereignty; but still making the same requirements from all—and, therefore, as a moral Governor, dealing in the same manner with all. For, as it has been more than once observed, the provision of a Saviour, and the promise of mercy through him, was a virtual abrogation of the original curse. It was equivalent to a universal pardon. It presented spiritual blessings to the acceptance of all the children of men—blessings to be enjoyed in the same manner—by means of repentance, faith, and obe-

dience; and, therefore, not mere impossible to be obtained by one than by another. Thus the atonement, if in itself adequate to the salvation of the world, lays an adequate basis for that system of moral government which Jehovah is still carrying on—a basis on which rest the invitations, threatenings, and promises of the gospel, the instruments of that government; and which will sustain the rectitude of the proceedings of the great day, when all will receive from God, as a moral Governor, that joyful or dread reward, which the Scriptures attach to the reception or rejection of the gospel. "The present dispensation," says Dr. Russell, "is not a mere charter of privileges, but includes also a system of moral government, by which God, in the use of appropriate means, exercises authority over men, as intelligent creatures. In other words, it is not merely a system of benevolence." And again, "The atonement of Christ, and the proclamation of mercy to all who believe on him, have laid the foundation of a particular exercise of moral government, while they are the medium of the most exalted displays of sovereign mercy and goodness." (Adamic and Mosaic Dispensations, pp. 233—236.)

On the other hand, let us contemplate the state of the case, as it must have existed, had there been any limitation in the sufficiency of the atonement itself—had Christ so died for some men only, as that his death would have been incompetent to the salvation of all men. In that case there would have been an obvious difference in the conduct of God, as moral Governor, in relation to individuals involved in the same condemnation. The sentiment opposed supposes that the original lapse of the species was followed by no new and merciful dispensation,—by no "accepted time," during which God will hear the supplications of all who implore mercy in the name of his Son,—and, at the expiration of which, will render to all, in his rectoral character, according to their reception or rejection of the salvation which had been exhibited to them;—but that, without the intervention of any such dispensation,—a dispensation which might afford an opportunity for a difference of final state being awarded according to the rules of moral government,—many are left to suffer the sentence of the

law which all have broken, while others, guilty of the same crime, are pardoned.

Though we do not admit human authority in religion, it may be well to remember that the sentiments which I have expressed in reference to the sufficiency of the atonement, have been held by individuals whose praise is in all the churches. I refer to a few, beginning with Calvin himself; for it is his final opinion on this point which is to be regarded as his real opinion. In his Exposition of the Holy Scriptures, written subsequently to his Institutes, he says, with reference to Matt. xxvi. 28, "*Sub multorum nomine non partem mundi tantum designat, sed totum humanum genus.*" Again, on Rom. v. 18, "*Communem omnium gratiam facit, quia omnibus exposita est, non quod ad omnes extendatur re ipsa. Nam etsi passus est Christus pro peccatis totius mundi, atque omnibus indifferenter, Dei benignitate offeretur; non tamen omnes apprehendunt.*" In his last will, also, drawn up by himself about a month before his death, he refers to the blood of Christ, and adds that it was "*effuso pro humani generis peccatis.*"

Dr. Owen, also, who at an earlier period of his life espoused the notion that the Redeemer suffered the exact quantum of punishment which the elect must have endured,—an opinion which necessarily implies that his atonement was not in itself sufficient for the salvation of all,—in more advanced age warmly recommended Polhill's Treatise on the Divine Will,—"*the arguments of which,*" he says, "*are suited to the genius of the age past, wherein accuracy and strictness of reason bear sway.*" And yet this treatise argues in the following manner: "*If Christ did in no way die for all men, which way shall the truth of these general promises be made out? 'Whosoever will, may take of the water of life.' What, though Christ never bought it for him? 'Whosoever believes shall be saved.' What, though there was no λυτρον, no price paid for him? Surely the gospel knows no water of life, but that which Christ purchased, nor any way of salvation but by a λυτρον, or price paid. If Christ no way died for all men, how can these promises stand true? All men, if they believe, shall be saved;—saved,*

but how? Shall they be saved by a *λυτρον*, or price of redemption? There was none at all paid for them; the immense value of Christ's death doth not make it a price as to them for whom he died not; or shall they be saved without a *λυτρον*, or price? God's unsatisfied justice cannot suffer it, his minatory law cannot bear it, neither doth the gospel know any such way of salvation; take it either way, the truth of those promises cannot be vindicated, unless we say that Christ died for all men." I do not wish to be understood as expressing approbation of the whole of this language. The writer seems to have entertained obscure conceptions in reference to the nature of the atonement,—the manner in which the death of Christ secured the pardon of sin. I merely quote it as involving the opinion that his sacrifice is in itself sufficient for the whole family of man; which is all for which I think it necessary to contend.

The following statements of the great Charnock are especially worthy of attention. "The wrath of God was so fully appeased by it, (the death of Christ,) his justice so fully satisfied, that there is no bar to a re-admission into his favour, and the enjoyment of the privileges purchased by it, but man's unbelief. The blood of Christ is a stream of which all men may drink, an ocean wherein all may bathe. If any perished by the biting of the fiery serpent, it was not for want of a remedy in God's institution, but from wilfulness in themselves. The antitype answers to the type, and wants no more a sufficiency to procure a spiritual good, than that to effect the cure of the body. He is, therefore, called the Saviour of the world. When the apostle says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe with thy heart, thou shalt be saved," he speaks to every man that shall hear that sentence. If all the men in the world were united to him by faith, there would not be any more required of Christ for their salvation, than what he hath already acted; for it is a sacrifice of infinite value, and infinite knows no limits. Since it was sufficient to satisfy infinite justice, it is sufficient to save an infinite number; and the virtue of it in saving one, argues a virtue in it to save all upon the same conditions. If

men, therefore, perish, it is not for want of value, or virtue, or acceptableness in this sacrifice ; but for want of answering the terms upon which the enjoyment of the benefits of it is proposed. If a man will shut his eyes against the light of the sun, it argues an obstinacy on the part of the person, not any defect in the sun itself. (Vide Discourse on the Acceptableness of Christ's Death.)

I add only the following quotations from the excellent Scott :—

“ It seems to be the decided opinion of his Lordship, (Bishop of Lincoln,) that the evangelical clergy, especially such of them as believe the doctrine of personal election, hold what is called particular redemption, whereas very few of them adopt it. The author of these remarks, (himself,) urged by local circumstances rather than by choice, above twenty-four years since, avowed his dissent from the doctrine of particular redemption, as held by many professed Calvinists, especially among the Dissenters.” It is to be regretted that Mr. Scott used the term *redemption* here. He evidently regarded it as identical with atonement. This is not the case, however. Redemption is the effect of atonement. It is the actual deliverance of its subject from condemnation, sin, and misery, on the ground of the atonement—or the price of redemption paid by the Son of God. Redemption, therefore, must be particular ; or, we must admit the unscriptural doctrine of universal salvation. This is, however, only a mistake as to phraseology. That Mr. Scott understood redemption in the sense of atonement, is manifest from the following passage :—“ The infinite value and sufficiency of the atonement made by the death of Him who was God and man in one mysterious person ; the way in which the Scripture calls on sinners, without distinction, to believe in Christ ; and every circumstance respecting redemption, shows it to be a general benefit, from which none will be excluded, except through unbelief.” (Reply, &c., pp. 447, 448.)

II. The second thing to be proved, in reference to the atonement, is, that Jehovah, as a Sovereign, having a right to dispense his favours as he pleases, did not determine to exert

that influence which would render the remedy effectual to salvation, save in the case of the elect. I confess, I want no other basis for the confidence I repose in this statement, than the fact, to which reference has been made, viz., that the remedy is not effectual in the case of all men. Few things can be more certain than that what an Almighty Saviour undertakes, he must accomplish; in other words, that if Christ died with the intention of rendering his atonement the means of salvation to all men, all men must be saved. There are more ways than one by which we may ascertain the purposes of God; yet, perhaps, a more certain mode of accomplishing this does not exist, than to examine the conduct of God. In our contests with Arminians, we contend that what he does, he previously determined to do; it is, obviously, equally manifest, that what he does not do, he did not previously determine to do. All men are not actually saved by Christ; all were not intended to be thus actually saved by him. If his purpose had been to bring all, by effectual and gracious influence, to the enjoyment of salvation, on the ground of that infinite atonement which was required as a necessary basis for the unlimited invitations of the gospel, what could have frustrated his intentions? "His counsel must stand, and he will do all his pleasure." Let us suppose the case, for the purpose of illustration, (and the case will suit our purposes in more senses than one,) that the whole human family were the subjects of a dangerous malady, for which Jehovah provides a remedy—a remedy which cannot, in the nature of the case, possess efficiency to remove the malady in one case, without being able to remove it in all cases. Its actual efficiency, however, depends upon its being taken; and the certainty of its being taken depends upon the Divine purpose to remove that dislike to it which would lead to its rejection. Now the question is, must not the number of persons restored to health by this medicine, correspond, or rather be identical, with that from whose minds Jehovah determined to remove that dislike of which we have been speaking? I see not how it can be doubted. Had it been the purpose of Jehovah to render it effectual universally, what could have prevented the perfect restoration to health of every

individual of the human family? In harmony with the preceding reasoning, we find it stated in Scripture, that "Christ laid down his life for the sheep,"—"that he gave his life a ransom for many,"—and "bare the sins of many,"—that the sacramental wine is an emblem of that blood which was shed for "the remission of sins unto many." It would be doing violence to language, to contend that the words "sheep," and "many," are of equivalent import with "all mankind." Nor does it appear to me necessary to suppose this, in order to support those views of the unlimited sufficiency of the atonement which have been given in preceding Lectures. The expressions, "Christ gave himself for the many," "the sheep," &c., denote that speciality of intention of which we are now speaking. He died with the intention of rendering his atonement efficacious to the salvation of many, (by visiting them with that special influence which would lead them to seek salvation, by repentance and faith,)—the many, that is, whom the Father had given to him, and to whom he had the power of giving eternal life.

In opposition to this statement, it will be said that Christ is represented as having "tasted death for every man," "for the whole world," &c. I answer,

That, if the objector understands no more by these expressions than that Christ so tasted death for every man, as that every man may be saved on his faith and repentance; or, that Jehovah, in his rectoral character, designed to provide an atonement sufficient in itself for the salvation of the whole world; I most cordially assent to the truth of this statement. But, if he contend that the truth taught by them is, that Christ, when he offered up himself, designed to render his atonement the means of saving the whole world, I answer,

First, that it is not necessary thus to understand the expressions. The terms "all," "every one," &c., are frequently used in the Scriptures, where they must be understood in a limited sense. Thus it is said, Mark i. 37, that when Simon, and they who were with him, had found him, they said unto him, "All men seek for thee." Again, Col. i. 23; "If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved

away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached unto every creature which was under heaven." (Vide, also, Mark v. 20; Acts xxii. 15; Rev. xix. 17; Phil. iii. 8; Luke xvi. 16; Acts xxi. 28.) Now, as the signification of these terms is sometimes clearly limited, this may be the case where they are used in reference to the death of Christ.

Secondly, I answer, that it is not probable that such is their meaning. They seem to have been employed in opposition to Jewish notions and prejudices. That nation wished to confine the goodness of Jehovah to themselves; and expected that the mission of the Messiah was intended for their exclusive benefit. It is not so, says John, in effect: "He is the propitiation for our sins," i. e., the sins of the Jews; "and not for ours only," he adds, "but for the sins of the whole world," i. e., of Gentiles, as well as Jews. There is nothing, then, in these statements, properly understood, to support the notion that Christ designed to effect the salvation of all men when "he poured out his soul unto death."

In addition to the preceding reasoning, it may be stated, that there must have been a speciality of intention on the part of Christ, in reference to the individuals who should receive, through Divine influence, eternal benefit from his sufferings, in order to preserve a coincidence and harmony in the counsels and ways of God. It was not the design of God, as we have seen, to save the whole of the human race; but, permitting the sentence of a violated law to overtake some, to rescue others upon whom his sovereign choice rested, for reasons of which we can form no adequate conception, from that abyss of wretchedness to which sin had reduced them. Can it be conceived, then, for a moment, that the intention of Christ, in reference to those who should receive eternal benefit from his sufferings, extended beyond these individuals? Must not the special purpose of Christ, in his death, coincide with the decree of election? However unlimited might be the efficacy of the medicine in itself, yet, since it was the determination of the Father to dispose the hearts of some only to receive and

take it, must we not suppose that they constitute the "sheep" of which the Saviour speaks—the "many sons," referred to by the apostle,—and that our Lord had the special intention of bringing them to the enjoyment of salvation, when "he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost?" I do not see, for my part, how it can be denied.

The views which I have endeavoured to lay before the reader, in reference to the unlimited sufficiency of the atonement on the one hand, and a speciality of intention in relation to its application on the other, seem to me to exhibit the true reconciling principle between apparently opposing Scripture statements; and to constitute the middle and safe course between the opposite and dangerous extremes of Arminianism on the one hand, and Ultra-Calvinism on the other. The former rejects any speciality of intention in reference to the application of the atonement, both on the part of the Father and the Son; and, rejecting this notion, the system supplies us with no grounds of confidence that the Saviour may not have shed his blood in vain. It is right in stating that it rendered the salvation of all men possible. It is wrong in disregarding those previous engagements of the Father and the Son, and that gracious design on the part of the Son, arising out of them, to lead certain individuals, by special grace, to implore that mercy which is offered freely to all,—without which no man can obtain it, which renders the salvation of some men certain.

The latter system, Ultra-Calvinism, seems to me to consider this speciality of intention, in reference to the application of the atonement, as entering into the very nature of atonement, so that there can be no value, no sufficiency, in the atonement, beyond its efficiency. To taste death for every man, or for all men, so necessarily means, in the apprehension of the advocates of this system, to die *instead* of all men, or with the design of saving all men, that they feel themselves absolutely compelled to limit the application of the general terms, to escape the unscriptural conclusion that all men must be saved. They forget the important distinction which exists between the design of God as a Sovereign, and a moral

Governor ;—that though, in the latter character, he must have designed to provide a sacrifice so infinite in its value as to render it just to himself, and safe to his government, to pardon the sins of all men for the sake of it, and so to constitute a basis on which a universal proclamation of mercy might be made to men ;—yet that he may not have intended, as a Sovereign, to bestow a disposition upon all to implore the mercy which as a Ruler he exhibits to all. They forget that, in the sense of opening a way for the salvation of all, Christ did die for all men, (whether that be the scriptural meaning of the expressions to which I now refer is another question,) or, rather, their system forbids the supposition that the door of mercy *was* set open to all men by the death of Christ. And, therefore, if they preach the gospel generally, it is merely on the principles stated formerly—that the elect are mingled with the mass of mankind, and so cannot be addressed any other way. On their part there is no *bond fide* proffer of mercy to any, but to those to whose salvation they conceive God designs to render it effectual ; nor is there any such, as they conceive, on the part of God himself. The non-elect are, in no sense, in a state of probation. Their final condition is not suspended upon their conduct in relation to the testimony of God concerning his Son. They were brought under condemnation by the breach of the law given to Adam ;—no way of escape is set open to them ; and yet, at the great day, they will be condemned for not resting on that atonement which was not in itself sufficient to secure their salvation !

Let us, for a moment, view the system we have been advocating, in the light of contrast with the notions of Ultra-Calvinism. Contemplating the whole human family as condemned, Jehovah did not determine to inflict punishment on some, and to pardon others, but to provide a sacrifice of infinite worth, by which every obstacle to the bestowment of mercy might be removed ; and then, as a moral Governor, or Judge, to offer pardon to all who chose to accept it, in the only manner in which it could be bestowed. Acting in harmony with this intention, he deals with men as the subjects of his moral government. By the threatenings and promises of the gospel

he brings those motives to bear upon men, which are the instruments of moral government. All men may be saved by Christ who desire to be saved; but all do not desire to be saved; and, according to our previous statements, a disposition to embrace that mercy which is offered to all, is not necessary to moral government; or to render an individual an accountable agent. Jehovah, however, while, as a moral Governor, he exhibits mercy to all, as a Sovereign, imparts, in the case of many, a disposition to embrace it, and thus secures their salvation. "The others he leaves to their own free agency." There is mercy for them if they choose to go and ask for it. He does not determine that they shall not ask it; but he permits them to receive or reject it, according to the determinations of their own minds. With reference to those whose wills he influences by sovereign goodness to receive it, he previously determined so to do. They are the elect,—“the many sons” whom the Father gave the Son, and whose salvation the latter intended to secure when he hung upon the cross. I do not say there are no difficulties in these statements, but they resolve themselves into the point contested between the Arminians and Calvinists, whether, when God offers blessings to men, under certain conditions if you will, he is obliged to impart a disposition to seek and enjoy them,—a difficulty which the Arminian scheme leaves completely unsolved, since common grace does not really impart a disposition to repent and believe.

LECTURE XIV.

JUSTIFICATION.

THE great blessing indicated by this term, comprehends the whole of one of two classes of blessings, the bestowment of which upon the chosen to salvation, is essential to the accomplishment of the Saviour's ultimate purposes of mercy with respect to them;—essential, indeed, to his attainment of that reward, the hope and prospect of which sustained him under the unparalleled sufferings he was called to endure. It was to secure to himself the honour of leading “many sons to glory,” that he “endured the cross, and despised the shame.” But the individuals who were to be thus ultimately blessed, were legally incapacitated to enter into that world where this glory is to be experienced; and, also, morally incapacitated to derive happiness from its possession, even had not the legal bar placed it utterly beyond their reach. They were both guilty and depraved. They had broken that most perfect law whose righteous award is death to every transgressor; and those unholy propensities which had led to this rebellion, and which would have prompted them to persist in it, rendered them totally unfit for heaven. It was, therefore, necessary that the Saviour should remove both the legal and the moral barrier, against the accomplishment of his ultimate purposes of mercy, and the attainment of his own reward. It was necessary that he should give them, as it is generally stated, and very properly stated, a title to heaven, and a moral meetness for heaven;—that he should pardon their sins, accept them as righteous, and renew them after his own image, before he could bring them to the mansions prepared for them above. This he does by conferring upon them the two important blessings of justification and sanctification; which

may be regarded, perhaps, as comprehending every thing that the Saviour bestows upon his people to secure their happiness and prosperity in this world, and to prepare them for glory.

The first of these blessings is now to form the topic of inquiry; and every thing in reference to it, which it is deemed desirable or important to state, may be comprehended under the following heads; viz., the *nature*, the *grounds*, and the *means* of Justification.

I.—THE NATURE OF JUSTIFICATION.

Every successful attempt to develop the precise nature of this exalted privilege, must carefully distinguish it from other blessings with which it is sometimes confounded. Let it be observed, therefore, that it is not the making of a person righteous by producing a change in the moral state of his mind,—a change from the love of sin to the love of righteousness. This is Sanctification, from which it is with great caution distinguished by the sacred writers. Christ is said to be made unto us, “wisdom and righteousness,” or justification, “and sanctification,” &c. Justification, in short, is not a change of character, but of state; not a change “of disposition in reference to the precepts of the Divine law, but of condition in regard to the promises and threatenings of that law.” The term which expresses the blessing is a forensic term; it may, therefore, be expedient to point out its exact and literal acceptance, when it occurs in reference to the proceedings of a human court of judicature; and then to examine how far this sense of the term will apply to the case of a sinner before God.

To justify, then, in the first of these cases, is to pronounce a sentence acquitting an individual of some crime which had been laid to his charge. Justification itself is, therefore, either the act of pronouncing this sentence of acquittal, or the acquittal itself. It supposes that an accusation had been brought against the individual, and that it had been found to be a false one; and the formal sentence of the court in which they utter and record their opinion, that the charge *is* really

false—that the accused person stands right in the view of the law—that he has not laid himself open to its sanctions, and its penalty; but that, notwithstanding the attempt to blast his character, he is fully entitled to receive from the judge, and the community at large, whatever measure of honour and reward is attached to perfect obedience to the law, is his justification.

Now, as the condition of an individual, when brought to believe the gospel, is described by the term “justified,” it is manifest that there must be a sufficient analogy between the justification of a sinner in the sight of God, and that legal declaration of righteousness which, as we have said, is uttered concerning an individual at a human tribunal, to warrant the application to it of that term. At the same time we must not venture to draw the conclusion, that justification with God, and with man, are in all respects identical. Such a conclusion has, indeed, been drawn by some, and has led them into great and dangerous errors; perverting all their views on the important point of a sinner’s acceptance with God, and enkindling feelings of self-confidence, and pride, and presumption, from the display of which true Christian humility and piety shrink back with instinctive abhorrence.

It becomes, then, a point of great importance to ascertain, and to state distinctly, both the respects in which Divine and human justification agree, and in which they differ; and, perhaps, one of the best modes of exhibiting the points of agreement, is to describe the points of difference. This has been done very accurately by a late excellent writer, whose words, for the double purpose of explaining and fortifying my own views upon this important subject, I quote: “He that is justified in an earthly court, unless it be for want of evidence, (which cannot possibly apply in this case,” i. e., at the Divine tribunal,) is considered as being really innocent; and his justification is no other than an act of justice done to him. He is acquitted because he appears to deserve acquittal. This, however, is not the justification of the gospel, which is of grace, through the redemption of Jesus Christ. Justification, in the first case, in proportion as it confers honour upon the justified, re-

flects dishonour on his accusers ; while, in the last, the justice of every charge is admitted, and no dishonour reflected on any party except himself. Justification among men is opposed not only to condemnation, but even to pardon ; for, in order to this, the prisoner must be found guilty, whereas in justification he is found innocent. But gospel justification, though distinguishable from pardon, yet is not opposed to it ; on the contrary, pardon is an essential branch of it. Pardon, it is true, only removes the curse due to sin, while justification confers the blessing of eternal life ; but without the former we could not possess the latter. He that is justified requires to be pardoned, and he that is pardoned is also justified. Hence a blessing is pronounced on him whose iniquities are forgiven ; hence also the apostle argues from the non-imputation of sin to the imputation of righteousness ; considering the blessedness of him to whom God imputeth not sin, as a description of the blessedness of him to whom he imputeth righteousness without works. Finally, justification at a human bar prevents condemnation ; but gospel justification finds the sinner under condemnation, and delivers him from it. It is described as passing from death to life. From these dissimilarities, and others, which, I doubt not, might be pointed out, it must be evident to every thinking mind, that, though there are certain points of likeness, sufficient to account for the use of the term, yet we are not to learn the Scripture doctrine of justification from what is so called in the judicial proceedings of human courts, and in various particulars cannot safely reason from one to the other."

These statements by Mr. Fuller evince the propriety of the remark by which they were introduced, viz., that one of the best modes of showing in what respects Divine and human justification agree, is to point out the respects in which they differ ; since it becomes now perfectly manifest that the agreement is to be traced, chiefly, if not exclusively, in the effects which flow from them. A man who is justified by his fellow men, i. e., pronounced righteous in the view of the law, enjoys the results or consequences of righteousness. A man who is justified by God enjoys, in like manner, the results or conse-

quences of righteousness ;—and, therefore, though the grounds on which these results are enjoyed in the two cases, are widely and essentially different,—the former individual enjoying them for his own sake, and the latter for the sake of Christ,—the term justification is applied, and very properly applied, to both.

To justify an individual, when God is the Justifier, is not, then, to pronounce him innocent, or righteous, since no men are really so ; nor by any conceivable process whatever can they be made actually so : but it is either to count him righteous, i. e., to treat him (as we shall afterwards see) as if he were righteous,—or to declare that the Divine government will so treat him, for a reason, or on a ground, which will be afterwards noticed. I do not mention it now, simply because it might tend to embarrassment, by diverting, in some measure at least, the thoughts of the reader from the one single point on which I would fix his attention. And, if such be the meaning of the phrase, “to justify,” it follows that to be in a justified state, is not either to be pronounced just, or to be made actually just,—for both are impossible in the case of a sinner : but it is to be treated as if we were just ; or rather, perhaps, to be in the state of those whom God declares that he will treat as if they were just ; i. e., it is to be in the faith of Christ ; for the Divine declaration is, that believers are the persons who shall be treated as if they were just. And this declaration is to be sought for, not in that volume to which no creature has access, recording the secret purposes of God, but in that other volume which he has graciously laid open to the inspection of all,—even that blessed word which says, “He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” “Justification,” says Mr. Fuller, “is our standing acquitted by the revealed will of God declared in the gospel. As the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, in the curses of his law ; so the righteousness of God is revealed,”—“in the declarations of the gospel. It is in this revelation of the mind of God in his word, I conceive, that the sentence both of condemnation and justification consists. He whom the Scriptures bless, is blessed ; and he whom they curse, is cursed.”*

* Works, vol. vii. p. 410.

The attention of the reader is especially directed to the last point affirmed in this quotation, viz., that the sentence of justification is to be found in that revelation of the mind of God which is contained in his word. Had this important statement, than which nothing can be more true, been recollected, we should have been preserved from many errors upon this subject, into which certain writers have fallen; from some of which, even the definition in the Assembly's Catechism is not, I venture to think, entirely free. "Justification," states that generally admirable summary of Divine truth, "*is an act of God's free grace, in which he pardoneth all their sins, (i. e., of believers,) accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight,*" &c. The alleged ground of justification it is not necessary to refer to. Now, with deference to the great and good men to whom the Christian church is so deeply indebted, I cannot but think that this definition is framed too much under the influence of the recollection of what takes place in human courts of judicature. It describes, with considerable accuracy, the happy results of justification; stating that the justified man is set free from the punishment due to his sins, and that he is treated as if he were a righteous man. The mistake, as it appears to me at least, in the definition—a mistake which leads to great embarrassment and difficulty—lies in calling justification an *ACT* of God, &c. For to pass over the anomalous phraseology,—“an *ACT* *in* which he pardoneth sin, *in* which he accepteth and accounteth them righteous,”—the terms employed force upon us the inquiries, “*When* did this act take place?” “In time, or in eternity?” “*Where* did it take place?” “In heaven, or on earth?” Many, there is no doubt, have been in the habit of using the word “act” in this connexion, without attaching any idea, or, at the most, a very vague idea, to it. Others have connected with it the notion of a judicial sentence. Justification is, as they conceive, a judicial sentence, on the part of God, announcing that an individual is pardoned, and accepted in the Beloved. In fact, it is difficult, if not impossible, to attach any other idea to the term “act” in this connexion, than that of a judicial sentence pronounced by God; and not recollecting,

or not conceiving, that this sentence is contained in the sacred Scripture, the individuals who employ this phraseology are embarrassed by the inquiries to which reference has just been made, "When and where was this judicial decision pronounced?" The conclusion arrived at is not uniform; some representing it as having taken place in eternity, or believing that the elect have been justified from eternity; while others imagine that "it is revealed to the consciences of men in time. They speak of themselves, and others, as having been justified under such a sermon, or at such a time; apparently meaning either that they had then a strong persuasion that they were justified;" or that God gave to them a distinct and personal revelation of that important fact.

Against the first of these opinions, or the doctrine of eternal justification, the following, amongst other reasons, may be advanced.

First, It is opposed to the general statements of Scripture upon the subject, which exhibit justification as being subsequent, in the order of nature at least, to calling, and repentance, and faith. "Whom he did predestinate," says the apostle, "them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." There is no reason to doubt, that the apostle intended to exhibit the order in which the people of God are brought to the enjoyment of these exalted privileges. They are not called *before* they are predestinated, nor justified before they are called; but *after* in each case; in the first of the cases, *after* in the order of time; in the latter, *after* in the order of nature. Should any one conceive it possible that the apostle may not have intended to exhibit justification as thus subsequent to calling, he will not surely deny that the two blessings are represented as inseparably connected with each other;—that he who is justified, is also called. And if this be admitted, it follows, that, if justified, we were also called, from eternity!

Again, "Repent," said Peter to the multitude, "and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for

the remission of sins, &c." (Acts ii. 38.) Now justification certainly includes the remission of sins; and repentance is here represented as being previous to remission. The individuals addressed were exhorted to repent *εἰς ἀφεσιν ἀμαρτιῶν*, in order to, or that they might obtain, the remission of their sins. But their repentance was future, (for some of them afterwards repented;) they could not therefore have been justified from eternity.

Further, justification is stated to be by faith: "Being justified by faith," says the apostle, "we have peace with God." Justification cannot, then, be previous to the act of believing, much less can it be from all eternity. It must be subsequent to that act. So manifest is this, that it is sometimes spoken of as future. "Seeing it is one God who *shall* justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." "Now it was not written for Abraham's sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also to whom it *shall* be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." "The Scriptures foreseeing that God *would* justify the heathen through faith," &c.

Finally, the Scriptures declare that God justifieth the ungodly, or the guilty; and, indeed, ungodliness, or guilt, must precede justification, for the latter includes pardon, and none but the guilty can be pardoned. But if the recipients of this blessing have been justified from all eternity, when were they guilty? Surely not before eternity. How could Jehovah ever regard them as guilty in eternity, (for guilt in time is precluded by the opinion itself,) when he had constituted them just from eternity? And yet, if there be no period in which he could regard them as guilty, how could he justify them, since justification absolves from guilt? Indeed, those who hold the wild notion of eternal justification, connect with it the opinion (we believe) that the elect did not fall under condemnation,—that Christ died to prevent this. But if this had been the design of his death, it may be again asked, "How then could God justify them, since the apostle declares that he justifieth the ungodly?"

Secondly, The notion of eternal justification involves a

great and obvious absurdity, viz., that sin was pardoned before it was committed, and guilt removed before it was contracted. Would it be more absurd to say, the earth, and all the works that were in it, were burnt up before they were created? And, moreover, this absurdity is increased by the conceptions which the advocates of this notion form of justification as a judicial sentence; for, in that case, "a sentence must have been pronounced or declared from eternity—before man was created"—"when no being existed but God himself;" i. e., it must have been "a decision declared to none; and, therefore, not declared at all."

Thirdly, The notion of eternal justification mistakes the purpose of God to justify, for the accomplishment of that purpose, i. e., the act of justification itself. We admit fully that it was the Divine purpose to create, and call, and justify, and glorify the elect. But why should it be thought that he has actually justified, any more than that he has actually created and glorified them? They were doubtless "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world;" i. e., were so united with him, in the gracious purpose of God, as to secure their sharing in his ultimate triumph and glory. But if their union with the Saviour fails to prove that they were glorified from eternity, it fails also to prove that they were justified from eternity. Justification is one only of the blessings which the eternal purpose of God secures to his people. Conversion to God, as well as a variety of others, is included, with justification, in the number of these blessings. How can it be supposed, then, that the latter has been enjoyed from eternity, while the former only comes into their possession in time? How can it have been enjoyed when they did not exist to enjoy it? Will any one venture upon the attempt to show why conversion should require the existence of an individual, and actual justification should not require it? If a man must *be*, in order to be converted, must he not also *be*, in order to be justified? The fact is, that the notion of justification from eternity, is only compatible with the notion of actual existence from eternity; and there is no way of supporting it but by maintaining, that a guilty and condemned

creature (for none others can be justified, since justification includes pardon) is, in fact, God, possessing one of the incommunicable attributes, viz., eternity, of the Deity.

Perceiving the absurdities which are involved in the notion of eternal justification, and yet adhering to the opinion that justification is an act or judicial decision of God, there are many who would seem to imagine that this decision is passed by God when an individual is brought to believe the gospel. But as a secret act of the Divine mind, absolving them from the guilt of sin, would not amount, in their conceptions, to a judicial sentence of absolution, they would seem to be driven to the necessity of supposing that this declaration is made to their consciences; or, that God gives to them a distinct and personal revelation of their acceptance with him. Now, although it were admitted that such revelations are ever made to men, we might still wonder how those who hold this notion should be able to conceal from themselves, that a revelation of their acceptance with God, made to them privately, cannot amount to the notion of a judicial sentence of absolution, in which, according to their system, the very essence of justification consists. When a man is justified at a human tribunal, he does not receive a private intimation from the judge, that he may retire with an unblemished character; he is publicly freed from the charge, and declared innocent. We deny, however, that such revelations are given to men. "There are, doubtless, things which God reveals unto men, but they are not those which were previously locked up in the Divine purposes; but things revealed in the Scriptures, and which had been previously hidden from them, as they still are from unbelievers, by their own criminal blindness. God reveals his secret purposes in relation to men *only by fulfilling them*. To pretend to a revelation or manifestation of that which is not contained in the Scriptures, is pretending to be inspired in the same extraordinary manner as were the prophets and the apostles."

"If justification consist in a manifestation, impression, or persuasion, that we are justified, condemnation must be a like impression, or persuasion, that we are condemned; but this

is not true. The Jews who opposed Christ were under condemnation, yet so far from being persuaded that that was the case, they had no doubt that God was their Father. Believers in Christ may, on the other hand, be impressed at times with strong apprehensions of Divine wrath, while yet they are not exposed to it. Neither justification, therefore, nor condemnation, consists in a persuasion of the mind that we are under the one, or the other. Besides, to make a thing consist in a persuasion of the truth of that thing, is a palpable absurdity. There can be no well-grounded persuasion of any thing, unless it be true and evident antecedently to our being persuaded of it." "The sum is, that neither condemnation nor justification consists in the secret purpose of God, but in his will, as revealed, *as if by a sentence*, in his word."

Let it then be remembered, that the sentence, and all the sentence, which God pronounces upon the state and character of any individual, or ever will pronounce, till the judgment of the great day, is to be found in the sacred Scriptures. He there declares that all who believe are justified; i. e., they are in that state in which he will treat them as if they were truly and personally righteous, for the sake of Him who was "made the end of the law for righteousness, to every one who believeth in him." Judgment had indeed come upon all men to condemnation; but Jehovah laid our help upon One who was mighty to save unto the very uttermost, all who come unto God by him. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." The atonement of the Saviour removed every obstacle, on the part of God, to the bestowment of pardon upon penitent transgressors. On this, as an adequate basis, he erects and unfurls the banners of mercy. He invites all to return from their wanderings,—unfolds the way in which the blessings of salvation are to be obtained,—and solemnly and judicially declares that all who believe in his Son are justified; that all who believe not are condemned. This is the judicial sentence.

Thus justification, if the word must be understood to denote some act or declaration on the part of God, (and not merely a

state of exalted privilege to which certain individuals are raised,) is not an act, or a sentence, having its date in eternity, by which men are acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous; nor is it a secret act or decision (declaration it could not in that case be called, as that supposes revelation) of the Eternal Mind, securing these exalted blessings to them; but it is that revealed act, or declaration, which proclaims that the individual who has been brought to the faith of Christ will receive, on a ground to be afterwards pointed out, all those blessings which he might have secured to himself by personal and perfect obedience.*

The preceding statements throw considerable light upon a point in reference to which there exists no little difference of opinion. Arminians in general, and some Calvinists, maintain that justification includes only the remission of sins; while others contend strenuously that it comprehends a right or title to eternal life. Now, if to justify an individual is to count, i. e., to treat him as if he were a righteous man,—if the main analogy between Divine and human justification is to be traced, as we have seen, in their effects,—it follows,

First, that justification must include in it deliverance from condemnation, or pardon. A man who is justified, at a human tribunal, is of course preserved by that act from condemnation, and consequent punishment. The indictment preferred against him was, in effect, an averment that he deserved to endure a certain amount of suffering. His justification is, in effect, a counter averment that he does not deserve to endure it; and, accordingly, he does not endure it. Justification, then, in connexion with the Divine government, must include

* No one, it is presumed, will understand the author to intimate that, when an individual is brought to the faith of Christ, he does not become personally interested in the salvation of the gospel. This is, doubtless, the case. The fact that he is so is known to God, who *reveals* it to him by his *conduct*—his gracious communications, &c.; and who will judicially and publicly proclaim this at the day of judgment. What is meant is, that there is no *particular* revelation to this individual of his personal acceptance,—that no private judicial *sentence* of acquittal is pronounced, constituting his justification:—that he is only justified, in the sense of acquittal by a judicial sentence, by the great and gracious general decision, “He that believeth shall be saved.”

pardon. A believer could not be treated as if he were a perfectly righteous man, unless this were the case. Nor is revelation silent on this point. The following passage proves that justification comprehends pardon. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *saying*, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 6, 8.) But,

Secondly, The blessing of justification secures the certain possession of all the honour and reward which are attached to perfect obedience. A righteous man is entitled not only to immunity from punishment, but to all the approbation, and to all the substantial benefits, which may be connected by law with the active and faithful discharge of the duties of citizenship. The language of the Divine law is, "Do this, and thou shalt live." Perfect personal obedience, i. e., righteousness, would have secured to an individual immortal life and blessedness. It seems to follow as a necessary consequence from this, that justification must secure an equal amount of good to all who believe, or they could not be treated as if they were perfectly righteous men. And the language of the apostle in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, ver. 1, 2, 18—21, renders it manifest that it does secure this. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." The language of the apostle, in the 19th verse especially, cannot be reconciled with the opinion, that justi-

fication includes forgiveness only; and this circumstance goes far to prove that they mistake his meaning in the fourth chapter, ver. 6—8, who maintain that he represents the imputation of righteousness, the forgiveness of iniquity, and the non-imputation of sin, as being perfectly identical. To impute righteousness, is a general phrase, meaning to count or treat any one as perfectly righteous. It includes in it, as a constituent part of the blessing, the forgiveness of sin; and, therefore, though in reality it includes more than this part, the apostle might very aptly quote language which describes the blessedness of a pardoned state, in proof of the blessedness of a justified state.

Justification, then, includes in it a title to life, since perfect obedience would have given such a title. It is to be remembered, however, that the life to which Divine justification raises, is far superior to that to which we could have attained by our own personal and complete obedience to the Divine law. It is given in reward of the Saviour's righteousness; and his interposition on our behalf—his agony and bloody sweat—the sufferings of his life, and his death on the cross, are so unspeakably meritorious in the eyes of the Father, that they secure, and must secure, a greater revenue of glory for himself, and for all his people, than they could have secured for themselves, had they preserved their integrity.

LECTURE XIV.

THE GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION.

By the ground of justification is intended to be understood, that for the sake of which, or as the reward of which, any members of the human family—all of whom have broken the Divine law—are now treated, and will hereafter be treated, as if they were perfectly righteous. On this point I submit the following observations:—

I. That this ground does not exist in those who enjoy this blessing; or, in other words, that none are, or can be, treated by God as righteous in reward of their own works. This is rendered certain by the express testimony of Divine revelation, and by the very nature of the case.

1st. The express testimony of Divine revelation may be appealed to. Numberless are the passages in which it is distinctly denied that justification is by works of law; or that the ground of justification is in the partaker of the blessing. It may be expedient to select one of these, and illustrate it rather fully; and then show that it is in entire harmony with the remainder. “Therefore,” says the apostle, Rom. iii. 20, “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” To perceive the full force of this denial, we must inquire into the meaning of the terms “flesh,” and “law,” which are here employed. The first of the terms ordinarily comprehends the whole of the human family, the members of which are so designated on account of the material or fleshly part of their nature.

The following passages are decisive on this point. “The end of all flesh is come before me, (Gen. vi. 13,) behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” “The congregation fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of

all flesh." (Num. xvi. 22.) "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." (Psalm lxxv. 2.) "The voice said, Cry; and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass," &c. (Isa. xl. 6.) God is said to be "the God of all flesh." (Jer. xxxii. 27.) He has promised to "pour out his Spirit upon all flesh." (Joel ii. 28.) Christ has "power given to him over all flesh." (John xvii. 2.) "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." (Luke iii. 6.) Now, as this is the ordinary sense of the term, we might assume, unless circumstances forbade us to do this, that such is its meaning in the passage now under consideration. The connexion, however, proves beyond all doubt that this is the case. The word "flesh" is evidently employed as equivalent with Jews and Gentiles, who comprehend the entire family of man. The apostle had just proved of both, that all, without a single exception, were, as sinners, guilty before God; and he draws from these premises the general conclusion, "that no flesh," i. e., that neither Jew nor Gentile, "can be justified by law in the sight of God."

And what is meant by the term "law" here? Pelagians, Socinians, and other abettors of the doctrine of human merit, restrict its application to the ceremonial law. The apostle teaches us, they allege, that mere ritual observances, when moral duties are neglected, will not ensure the salvation of any man. To this it is replied,

First, That the bare consideration of the passage itself is sufficient to show, that such is not the meaning of the writer. He denies that any can be justified by the law *to which he refers*. Now what was that law? Surely not the ceremonial law of the Jews, "because, except the Jews themselves, none of the human race can either be accepted, or condemned, or even tried by that law; since the rest of mankind not only have never known it, but in many instances have been absolutely unable to obtain the knowledge of it; nor were they ever put under it; so that where there is no law, there is no transgression."

Secondly, That the law by which no flesh can be justified, is that by which is the knowledge of sin; since to impart that

knowledge is, as we are told at the close of the verse, the exclusive object of the law. Now, that it is the moral law which conveys the knowledge of sin, is placed beyond all doubt by the language which occurs in the seventh verse of the seventh chapter of this same epistle: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid! Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Nothing can be clearer than that the reference here is to the moral law; since it is in that law that the prohibition of lust, i. e., covetousness, is contained.

Thirdly, That since the term "law" is anarthrous in the original, the passage should be rendered, "Wherefore by works of law," not of the law, "no flesh shall be justified;" i. e., by works of law in the absolute sense: no man can be justified by any works whatever, of any law whatever, whether natural or revealed.

Finally, That to restrict the application of the term to the ceremonial law, would totally subvert the apostle's argument. The obvious design of Paul—so obvious, indeed, is this design, that it is wonderful any one should deny, or even mistake it—is to show the necessity of being justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The 20th verse, the verse now under consideration, is a part of the premises on which this conclusion is built. But, if we understand by the term "law," the ceremonial law merely, how would these premises contribute to support the great general truth which it was the obvious aim of the writer to establish? It is useless to show merely that there is one law by which we cannot be justified, if there exist another by obedience to which life may be obtained. The term "law" must be understood indefinitely, universally; or the reasoning of the apostle fails to evince the necessity of the gospel method of salvation. By restricting the application of the term to mere ritual observances, we prevent the attainment of the great object of the apostle's life and labours; viz., to render it impossible for any to glory in the Divine presence.

The assertion, then, of the apostle in this verse, is, that the

ground of justification is not to be found in the recipient of the blessing; or that none are treated by God as righteous in reward of their own works. Let us now proceed to show that this assertion is in perfect conformity with the general current of his writings. "I do not frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness came by the law," or by personal obedience to the law, "then Christ is dead in vain." (Gal. ii. 21.) "For as many as are of the works of the law," i. e., as many as are expecting and striving to obtain justification as the reward of their own works, "are under the curse," (since they have not perfectly obeyed the law,) "for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) With the full recollection of this important declaration, he says, in the second chapter, ver. 15 and 16, "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." In the ninth chapter to the Romans, having exhibited the deplorable condition of his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, he proceeds to point out the actual source of all the evils that had befallen them; declaring that it was the radical mistake they had committed in reference to the important point of a sinner's acceptance with God;—a mistake which threw them, in point of privilege, behind the very Gentiles whom they despised. "What shall we say, then," is his language, "that the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith? But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, have not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because," he adds, "they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law." (Chap. ix. 30—32.) In the commencement, also, of the tenth chapter, having most pathetically bewailed the state of his brethren, he proceeds again to ascribe it to their unscriptural method of seeking justifica-

tion: "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God."

These passages expressly declare that it is utterly impossible for a sinner, and for that very reason, to obtain justification by the deeds of the law. The same truth, let it be further observed, is also obviously implied in those parts of the inspired volume which declare that man is actually justified by faith, and not by works; since righteousness comes by faith, for the sole reason that it could not come by works. Had there been a law which could have given life, "verily, righteousness would have been by that law." The very fact, then, that righteousness is said to come by faith, if it be a fact, proves, with all the certainty of a moral demonstration, that men are not justified, and cannot be justified, by law. It is impossible to conceive that Christ would have died in vain. Now, what saith the Scripture concerning the mode of justification? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now, to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 3—5.) "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Chap. iii. 20—24.) "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Chap. v. 1.)

It is needless to multiply proofs that the notion of the possibility of obtaining justification by the deeds of the law, is directly negatived by the word of God.

2ndly. The very nature of gospel justification may be appealed to in proof of the assertion, that God does not justify any on the ground of their own works. If Divine justifica-

tion were in all respects the same as human,—if it were a judicial declaration that the sin, laid to the charge of an individual, had in point of fact not been committed by him, it would be clearly impossible not only for a sinner to be justified on the ground of his own works, but to be justified at all. No being in the universe could thus justify a transgressor, without falsehood. The God of perfect knowledge must mistake the character of the being at his bar, or the God of perfect truth must lose his faithfulness, and even his Divinity, before he could declare the sinner not to be a sinner, i. e., to justify him, on the ground of his works.

And though Divine and human justification are not identical, the impossibility of the justification of a sinner, on the ground of his own works, is not less apparent in reference to that modified view of the nature of the former, which has been presented in the preceding pages. For the individual whom God justifies is accounted, i. e., as we shall see, treated as if he were perfectly righteous. But all the members of the human family are sinners. How then can a God of wisdom, who cannot form a mistaken estimate of character, and a God of justice, who will render to all their due, treat any as righteous, (i. e., for their own sakes, or as the reward of their own works,) who are sinners; and who have not merely transgressed in one instance, but whose “sins are more in number than the hairs upon their heads, or the sands upon the seashore?” To treat the righteous and the guilty alike, is surely contrary to our conceptions of that equity which should mark all the judicial proceedings of the moral Governor! Nay, to treat the righteous and the *penitent* alike, being a mode of conduct powerfully and directly calculated to defeat the end of moral government, must be equally impossible to the great Lord of all. No sinner can be treated as righteous for his own sake. We now pass on,

II. To observe, that the ground of justification is the all-sufficient and perfect work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; including, in that expression, his perfect obedience even unto death. The following statements sufficiently prove this declaration: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there

shall no flesh be justified in his sight." "But now the righteousness of God" (i. e., the righteousness which he has provided)* "without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference." (Rom. iii. 20—22.) "Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Chap. v. 9.) "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Ver. 18, 19.) "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth these things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*,) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Chap. x. 3—10.) "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) "And this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 6.)

In addition to the foregoing passages, which expressly declare that the perfect obedience even unto death of the Son of God is the ground of justification, we may refer to those

* Vide Haldane's Exposition of Romans on this text.

which affirm its gratuitous nature, as teaching the same thing. If we are justified freely, by the grace of God, our own works cannot manifestly be the ground of our justification. The man who is treated as righteous because he is actually righteous, is under no obligation to the moral Governor for thus treating him. He has a claim to justification which cannot be equitably resisted. Hence the apostle says, "Now to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt." The reward can only be reckoned of grace when it is not bestowed on account of the works of him who receives it; when it is given without any consideration at all; or when, as in the case of the justification of sinners, that consideration is the worthiness of another. Then the reward is of grace.

I have exhibited (and the attention of the reader is especially directed to this point) the perfect work of our Lord, including, in this phrase, his obedience and his sufferings, i. e., his obedience even unto death, as constituting the ground on which the guilty (i. e., in themselves) are treated as if they were righteous, because I apprehend this mode of statement rescues us from many of the difficulties in which those are involved who adopt a more systematic and technical phraseology. It is the opinion of many, who make that distinction between what are called the active and passive obedience of our Lord, to which reference has been more than once made, that atonement was made by his death, and that justification flows exclusively from his obedience. It is impossible, so it appears to me, to reconcile this opinion with the declaration of the apostle, that we are justified by the blood of Christ. It is true, he adds, in the same chapter, that we are made righteous by his obedience; still that does not contradict or neutralize the previous declaration: and it ought, moreover, to be remembered, that the obedience to which he refers comprehended his death. I scarcely think it would ever have been doubted, that believers are treated as righteous, though actually and personally guilty, for the sake not of one part of the Redeemer's work alone, but on the ground of the entire work, had not certain mistakes existed in reference to the public representative character of our Lord,—mistakes, which appear to

me to have arisen from incautiously pushing truth into error ; and which have powerfully contributed to obscure the simple majesty of scriptural doctrine and statement. I must be permitted to dwell at some length on this point, as it is one of great importance in itself, and is, moreover, adapted to show in what manner the practice of dividing the one work of our blessed Lord into separate parts, and ascribing a distinct office to each of them, originated.

“ That the Lord Jesus Christ sustained a public character, or that his mediatorial engagements were undertaken and performed on the behalf, and for the benefit of others, is rendered manifest by the similitude which the apostle represents, in the 5th chapter of the Romans, as existing between him and Adam.” Yet it is very possible to misinterpret the language in which this most important truth is taught ;—to err by attaching to some of the terms in which we are in the habit of stating it, too literal a signification ; and by permitting what takes place at a human tribunal, when an individual is justified, to govern too completely our views in reference to the justification of a sinner before God. At a human tribunal no man can be justified without a perfect righteousness ; since to justify him is to pronounce him faultless in the eye of the law. We infer, accordingly, that all who are justified at the bar of God must possess a perfect righteousness, which can only be obtained by imputation, their own being imperfect. The perfect righteousness of Christ, their legal representative, is therefore, we conclude, counted to them, or reckoned as theirs ; and hence they enter heaven, and have a right to enter heaven, as righteous persons. Now, if all this be soberly and not too literally explained ;—if the intention be merely to intimate, by a phraseology somewhat technical, and allusive to the proceedings which take place in earthly judicatories, that it is really for the sake, or on the ground, of the work of Christ,—in token of the moral Governor’s approbation of it, or in reward of it—that any who are themselves guilty are treated, or can be treated, as if they were righteous, no sentiment can be more just, and certainly none more important. Unfortunately, however, the statements of which we

are now speaking, have not always been soberly explained: "Gospel truths have been squared," "according to human measures and models." Resembling processes have been represented as identical ones. Mistakes in reference to the relation existing between Christ and his people, as well as to the imputation of his righteousness to them, have been committed by numbers, the practical influence of which has been, in various instances, most deplorable. In the hope of guarding the reader against similar misconceptions, and of elucidating the subject more fully, I will call his attention to two or three distinct views of the nature of imputation.

The first is the opinion of those who conceive of the imputation of the Saviour's righteousness to believers, as consisting not in the mere communication to them of the consequences of that righteousness—nor even in the legal counting of that righteousness to them; but in an actual and literal transfer of it to them. As a necessary counterpart of this sentiment, they hold that Christ became actually a sinner. "Hast thou been an idolater," says Dr. Crisp, "a blasphemer, a despiser of God's word, a profaner of his name and ordinances, a thief, a liar, a drunkard? If thou hast part in Christ, all these transgressions of *thine* become actually the transgressions of Christ, and so cease to be *thine*, and thou ceasest to be a transgressor from the time that they were laid upon Christ, to the last hour of thy life; so that now thou art not an idolater, a persecutor, a thief, a liar, &c.; thou art not a sinful person. Reckon whatever sin you commit, when, as you have part in Christ, you are all that Christ was, and Christ is all that you were, as his." (Vide Crisp's Sermons, p. 270.) And again, "Believers think that they find their transgressions in their own consciences, and they imagine there is a sting of this poison still behind, wounding them; but, beloved, if this principle be received as a truth, that God hath laid *thine* iniquities upon Christ, how can thy transgressions, belonging to Christ, be found in thy heart and conscience? Is thy conscience Christ?" (P. 269.)

The pen of the author has literally trembled while transcribing these atrocious passages, libelling most profanely and

foully, as they do, that Holy Lamb of God, who "offered himself without spot," and, when he endured the vengeance due to our sins, "suffered the just for the unjust." Yet Dr. Crisp was perfectly consistent with himself, and with his principles, in these shocking statements; for there cannot be a literal transfer of the Saviour's righteousness to us, without a corresponding literal transfer of our sin and guilt to him. If we become really righteous, Christ became really a sinner. We demand, then,

First, plain scriptural authority for a sentiment so injurious in its moral influence upon man—so dishonourable to the Saviour. The partisans of the system would probably reply, that God is said to have laid upon Christ the iniquities of his people;—that the Saviour bare our sins in his own body," &c. We reply, that the obvious meaning of these passages is, that Christ endured the consequences, or the punishment, of our sins; and hence it is said, in the latter of them, that "Christ bare our sins in his own *body* upon the tree." No sober-minded interpreter of Scripture can imagine that such declarations were intended to intimate that our pollution and guilt were literally transferred to Him. But then it is said, we shall be told, that Christ was made sin for us. Undoubtedly he was, we reply, but not a *sinner*, as the scape-goat of old, which no one imagines to have become a sinner. He was made sin in the sense, as some suppose, of having our sin legally counted to him, so as that he should endure its consequences; or, as others imagine, in the sense of being made a "sin-offering" for us. And if it be retorted upon us, that it is not said he was made a "*sin-offering*," we answer, neither is it said that he was made a *sinner*, but sin; which, it is obvious to remark, as naturally means a sacrifice for sin, as a participator of sin. We observe,

Secondly, that this notion of an actual transfer of character between Christ and believers, is at utter variance with those "confessions and lamentations of believers which are recorded in Scripture;" and with those petitions for forgiveness which we are commanded to present daily unto God. "Consistently with the system opposed," says Mr. Fuller, "these confessions

could only arise from the circumstance, that those who uttered them, were under the mistake which Dr. Crisp labours to rectify; i. e., thinking sin did not cease to be theirs, even when under the fullest persuasion that the Lord would not impute it to them, but would graciously cover it by the righteousness of his Son." (Vol. iv., p. 98.) We maintain,

Thirdly, that the notion is as irrational, and the supposed literal transfer of righteousness and guilt as impossible, as we have shown it to be unscriptural. I agree with Mr. Fuller, in thinking that "guilt and innocence," or sin and righteousness, "are transferable in their effects, but untransferable in themselves." Surely a moment's reflection upon the nature of each, must convince every rational being that this is the case. For *what is righteousness?* Conformity to law. What was the righteousness of Christ? His own personal conformity to the Divine law;—the holy exercises of his mind, together with the unblameableness of his conduct. His perfect love to God and man, burning with unsullied purity in his bosom, and emanating from it in every word he uttered, and in every action he performed. Now, how can this righteousness of the Redeemer become ours otherwise than in its consequences? How can the exercises and feelings of his mind literally become the exercises and feelings of our minds? By the grace of his Spirit he can produce a resemblance between the habitual state and exercise of our minds, and of his own; but still this is only conformity, not identity. The feelings of the Saviour are his own; his righteousness is his own: by no process whatever can the latter literally become ours. And *what is sin?* Want of conformity to the Divine law. What is our sin? Our own want of conformity to that law; our unholy thoughts, and feelings, and actions. How can they become literally the thoughts, and feelings, and actions of Christ? And what is guilt? Strictly and literally considered, it is the DESERT of punishment. To be guilty, in the proper sense of the term, is not merely to be exposed to punishment, but to merit it. Guilt, in this sense, can only belong to the offender. It necessarily supposes actual and personal transgression; and cannot, therefore, be trans-

ferred to the Saviour. "If," says Mr. Fuller, "Jesus Christ became by imputation *deserving* of punishment, we by non-imputation *cease to deserve* it; and if our demerits be literally transferred to him, his merits must of course be the same to us; and then, instead of approaching God as guilty and unworthy, we might take consequence to ourselves before him, as not only guiltless, but meritorious beings. It is not denied that, in a looser sense, the word "guilt" may be taken to denote obligation, or legal obnoxiousness to punishment. In this sense of the term, guilt may, indeed, be transferred to Christ, and really was so. But this, correctly speaking, is the consequence of guilt, rather than the thing itself. A guilty man is one who deserves, and is consequently legally obnoxious to punishment. Exposure, or legal obnoxiousness to punishment, was transferred to Christ, but not desert of punishment; i. e., he bore the consequences of our guilt, but did not partake of the guilt itself: as we receive the consequences of his work, but did not perform the work ourselves.

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LECTURE XV.

THE GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION.

THE second opinion on this great subject, to which the attention of the reader is directed, is that of those who conceive of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers as consisting, not indeed in the *literal* transfer of his righteousness to them, but in the legal counting of it to them, as a step distinct from, and previous to, their participating in the consequences of that righteousness. No one, it is alleged, can be *treated* as righteous, until he is *considered* righteous. The first step in the process is, therefore, to *constitute* him righteous, which is not done, it is admitted, by a literal transfer of Christ's righteousness to him, and so making it *actually* his own (which is allowed to be impossible,) but by reckoning it to him *as if it were his own*; and then, being thus rendered just in the eye of the law, the second step in the process is to treat him as a perfectly righteous man.

This appears to have been the opinion of Calvin. "What is it," says he, "to place our righteousness in the obedience of Christ, but to affirm that hereby only we are accounted righteous; because the obedience of Christ is imputed to us, *as if it were our own*?" Such, also, was the opinion of Mr. Fuller, who has illustrated this particular notion of imputation more happily, perhaps, than any other writer. "It is not," he tells us, "the actual transference of our sins to Christ, so as to constitute him really a sinner; nor the actual transference of his righteousness to us, so as to constitute us really innocent and praiseworthy; but the legal counting of our sins to him, so as that he endured the consequences of them, and the legal counting of his righteousness to us, so as that we enjoy the blessings which are given in reward of it." In this

sense Mr. Fuller thinks we are to explain the language of the apostle, "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) "There is," he says, "an allusion in this passage to the sin-offering under the law, but not to its being made a sacrifice. There were two things," he adds, "belonging to this sin-offering: First, the imputation of the sins of the people, signified by the priest's laying his hand upon the head of the animal, and confessing over it their transgressions, and which is called putting them upon it; i. e., it was counted in the Divine administration, as if the animal had been the sinner, and the only sinner of the nation. Secondly, offering it in sacrifice, or killing it before the Lord for an atonement. Now the phrase 'made sin,' appears to refer to the first step in this process in order to the last. It is expressive of what was preparatory to Christ's suffering death, rather than to the thing itself; just as our being made righteous, expresses what was preparatory to God's bestowing upon us eternal life. But the word 'made,'" he adds, and let the reader observe this, "is not to be taken literally, for that would convey the idea of Christ's being really the subject of moral evil. It is expressive of a Divine constitution, by which the Redeemer, with his own consent, stood in the sinner's place, as though he had been himself the transgressor; just as the sin-offering under the law was in mercy to Israel reckoned, or accounted, to have the sins of the people put upon its head; with this difference, that was only a shadow, but this went really to take away sin." (P. 88.)

On the same principles, Mr. Fuller proceeds to deny that it can be said with any propriety, with any decency even, that our blessed Lord was *punished* when he hung upon the cross. Punishment, he states, in substance at least, and very correctly supposes criminality, and the criminality of *the person who sustains it*. "If Paul," he adds, "had sustained the punishment due to Onesimus for having wronged his master, yet it would not have been real and proper punishment to him; but suffering only, as not being inflicted in displeasure against

him." And, in applying these more general remarks to the atonement of Christ, he says, that "his sufferings, though they were a punishment, and he sustained it, were really and properly the punishment of our sins, and not his. . What he bore was punishment, i. e., it was the expression of the Divine displeasure against transgressors. So what we enjoy is reward; i. e., it is the expression of God's well-pleasedness in the obedience and death of his Son. But neither is the one a punishment to him; nor the other, properly speaking, a reward to us." (P. 90.)

There can be no doubt, I imagine, that Mr. Fuller's views in reference to the nature of imputation, are not only more rational, but more entirely in accordance with the whole current of Divine revelation, than those of Dr. Crisp, and of the Ultra-Calvinistic school in general. There are many, however, and I confess myself one of them, who imagine that he has exhibited a distinction without a difference; or rather, that he has spoken of, and attempted to describe, two steps in the process, while there is in reality only one. I proceed, therefore, to unfold more fully, what has been more than once briefly glanced at, viz. :—

The third opinion in reference to the nature of imputation, in relation to the Saviour's righteousness, viz., that it consists not in the actual transfer of that righteousness to believers; nor yet in the legal counting of it to them as a thing distinct from, and a step previous to, *treating* them as righteous; but that this latter identifies itself with the former,—the scriptural sense of the phrases, to count sin, or righteousness, to an individual (whether it be his own, or that of some one else) being *to treat that individual as a sinful or a righteous man*. To prevent mistake and misrepresentation, I request the reader especially to observe, that this latter view of the nature of imputation assumes, that the one perfect work of the Son of God, is the ground of justification, to the total exclusion of any and every other; though it denies that his righteousness actually passes over to the believer, or literally becomes his; or, that it is legally counted to the believer, i. e., if by that phraseology be meant any thing distinct from, and previous

to, *his being treated as a just man*, for the sake or in reward of the righteousness of Immanuel.

The reader will hereafter see also, how completely this view of the nature of imputation subverts the whole fabric of Antinomianism, removing the very foundation on which it stands, and on which it can alone stand, a literal commutation of persons in the case of Christ and his people. We proceed, then, to an examination of Scripture phraseology with the view of showing that the phrases, to count sin or righteousness to an individual, really means *to treat him as a sinful or a righteous man*. In Numbers xviii. 27, we read, "And this your heave-offering shall be reckoned (counted, imputed) unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor, and as the fulness of the wine-press;" i. e., the offerers would be treated as though they had offered, what in reality they did not offer. In the address of Shimei to David, we find the following expression, "Let not my lord impute iniquity to me;" i. e., obviously, "Do not punish me." The request cannot have been that David would *count* him innocent, (or if it were, *counting* him innocent, and not punishing him, are identical,) since he proceeds to say, "For thy servant doth know that I have sinned." (2 Sam. xix. 20.) In reference to the Gentiles, the apostle Paul says, "If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be *counted* for circumcision?" (Rom. ii. 26.) "Now when it is said," very justly observes Dr. Russel, "that his uncircumcision shall be *counted* unto him for circumcision, the meaning cannot be that it is actually *counted* to him; for it is a merely negative thing, and therefore cannot properly be reckoned to him; the meaning must be, that *he shall be treated as though he were circumcised*, by having granted him all the blessings of the separated people of God, of whose separation to Jehovah, circumcision in its highest sense was a sign." "And Rachael and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion of inheritance for us in our father's house? Are not counted of him (imputed of him) strangers?" i. e., we are *treated* by him as strangers; not reckoned or considered strangers.

Hence they immediately add, "For he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money." (Gen. xxxi. 14, 15.) "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" i. e., not inflicting punishment upon them for their sins, but making atonement. (2 Cor. v. 19.) "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin;" i. e., not inflict punishment on account of it. (Rom. iv. 8.)

To impute sinto an offender, or to lay it to his charge, is,—then, *to treat him as a guilty person*, and is not merely a previous step to his being so treated. Not to impute sin, or not to lay it to his charge, is not to treat him as if he were guilty. To impute or count the sin of Adam to us, is to treat us as if we had committed it. To impute our sins to Christ, is to inflict upon him the punishment due to them. To impute his righteousness to us, is to treat us as if we possessed it. God counted sin to Christ by making him a sin-offering; for the *offering* of the bullock for a sin-offering, is said to be, the words being literally rendered, "*making it sin.*" (Num. viii. 12.)* God counts righteousness to us, or the righteousness of Christ to us, by giving us pardon and eternal life, in consequence, or in reward of it. When it is said, that faith is counted to the believer for righteousness, the meaning is not that God reckons his faith *as if it were* righteousness; or that it is reckoned *unto his receiving righteousness*, (as Mr. Haldane says, for the words convey no meaning,) but simply, that he is treated as a righteous person; and, consequently, the three forms of expression—to be justified by faith,—to have Christ's righteousness imputed to us,—and to have faith counted to us unto righteousness or justification, mean precisely the same thing, viz., to enjoy the blessings which God bestows upon men, in reward of that work of his Son, which he never con-

* The reader is requested to refer also to chap. xii. 11. The leprosy of Miriam was the consequence of her sin and that of Aaron. The visitation upon her of this consequence of sin, was *putting the sin upon her*. And hence when Aaron implored of Moses that the leprosy might be removed, he uses the phraseology, "Lay not the sin upon us:" i. e., let not the leprosy continue to rest upon us.

templates but with ineffable delight; and which constitutes "a moral basis for the extension of holy benevolence on a most widely extended scale, to such as in themselves were both wretched and worthless."

The attention of the reader is particularly directed to the above statement of the specific mode, in which the work of our Lord operated, to permit the Divine government to *treat the guilty as if they were righteous*. It formed a moral ground on which pardon, and all the blessings of salvation, might be imparted to men, in harmony with the claims and safety of moral government. Man had broken a law, the rectitude, and honour, and efficiency of which, it became the moral Governor to uphold. Had this been done by the literal execution of its sentence, the whole of the human family must have perished. An expedient, therefore, exhibiting the infinite grace of Jehovah, was resorted to;—an expedient, designed at once to save the honour and efficiency of the law, the character of the lawgiver, and the transgressor. The eternal Word interposed. He consented to do and to suffer all that was necessary to exhibit to the whole of the intelligent universe, in a most impressive and appalling manner, the infinite evil of sin, the complete perfection of the Divine law, and the utter fallacy of the hope, that under the government of the great Being from whom it emanated, transgression can ever be permitted to pass unpunished; and in this way, to render possible the extension of mercy to the guilty. To accomplish this gracious purpose, it was necessary for him to honour the precepts of the law, by obeying them; and its penalty, by suffering it; and thus to show that the law was righteous in all that it enjoined, as well as in all that it threatened. And it is entirely, as we have said, on the ground of this work, or as the reward of it; as a manifestation of the infinite complacency with which the Father rests in the work of his Son, displaying thereby his paramount regard to righteousness, that any members of the human family, whom nothing, no, not even the blood of Christ itself, can preserve from the *desert* of punishment, thought it does preserve from the punishment itself, are treated as righteous. i. e., are justified.

"The principle involved in this procedure, viz. the principle of conferring benefits on many, from a regard to the moral worthiness of some distinguished individual, whom God highly approved," says Mr. Bennet, (in a passage which I beg to quote for the purpose of fortifying my own opinions,) "is repeatedly recognized and exemplified in the scriptural history of Divine procedure. The children of one family were blessed of God for their father's sake; witness the family of Noah, on account of whose righteousness they were received into the ark, and so escaped the deluge. The natural descendants of Abraham at large were blessed with distinguishing national favours, and religious privileges, out of God's regard to his eminent piety and practical obedience, as we find from Gen. xxvi. 4, 5."

"It is evident, however," he adds, and the remark is of the highest importance, "that the righteousness of these holy individuals did not pass over to their families and descendants, so as to render them either subjectively holy, or morally meritorious in the sight of God. It remained in their own persons, as the proper subjects of moral worth; and the commendable excellency thereof was strictly confined to themselves. Nevertheless, in the providential dealings of God with their offspring, a high and honourable respect was had, and was declared of God to be had, to the righteousness and moral worth of these individuals; so that while his favours, conferred on their descendants, were unmerited by the recipients themselves, yet from their intimate relation to them, they were benefited in a manner consistent with moral rectitude.

"All this, I conceive, may elucidate to us the way in which the righteousness of the Mediator, joined with his sacrifice, is the moral ground of the gospel constitution, both in the pardon of sin to the penitent believer, and in his full acceptance before God. Christ himself perfectly fulfilled all righteousness; and the whole merit thereof rested in him alone; so as to found his own righteous claim to the recompense of reward."—"But with respect to believers, they are said to be 'justified freely, by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' Rom. iii. 24. They have no personal merit, nor com-

plate moral excellency of themselves ; neither does the righteousness of the Mediator become subjectively theirs ; but, in all its perfection and moral worth, remains wholly in himself. They have no participation of his merits as Mediator and Redeemer ; which belong to him personally and exclusively, in consequence of his having ‘ trodden the wine-press alone, and of there being none of the people with him.’ ” (Isa. lxiii. 3.)

All that passes over, or can actually pass over, from Christ to believers, is the reward of his righteousness. There is, indeed, a legal transfer of that righteousness to them. But this, is at the most, only the *counting* of it to them, the *placing* of it to their account ; and the more frequently and attentively these latter forms of expression are examined, the more full and general will become, as I cannot but think, the conviction, that they are identical in meaning with *treating them as righteous persons*, in reward of the Saviour’s work.

I am well aware it will be said, “ But must not an individual be *counted* righteous,—must not the law *consider* him as such, before it *can treat* him as righteous ? ” I answer, that he cannot be thus treated, without a moral basis for the extension of holy benevolence to him, such as that which is supplied by the obedience and sufferings of the Mediator ; but now that the basis has been laid, the Divine government presents no obstacle to its communication ; and, in relation to the salvation of a being who is himself unholy and guilty, it will be found, unless we are greatly mistaken, to relieve no one difficulty, to suppose that the Divine Being first *counts* the righteousness of the surety to him, i. e., considers that as really belonging to him, which in point of fact does not, before he *treats* him as righteous. It introduces, indeed, a difficulty where otherwise there would have been none ; since, as Mr. Bennet has happily and satisfactorily shown, “ the practice of conferring benefits upon many, from regard to, and as an expression of approbation of, some eminently distinguished individual,” may be regarded as a law of the Divine government : while, on the other hand, the procedure supposed, viz., *CONSIDERING a person what he really is not, and then TREATING him as if he HAD been what he is not*, has no analogy in

any part of the Divine conduct. If, indeed, the righteousness of Christ became really and literally, and not merely legally, the believer's, the case would be different. Dr. Crisp, and his school, are the only consistent men on this point. The second opinion in regard to imputation, viz., that it is the legal counting of the Saviour's righteousness to the believer, as a step distinct from, and previous to, the *treating of them as righteous*, so far from explaining and justifying the Divine procedure, only serves, as I can not but think at least, to involve a plain matter in obscurity and mystery.

The reception of this simple and, it is conceived, scriptural view of imputation, has been partially prevented by forgetfulness of the important sentiment, that though Divine and human justification bear a strong analogy to each other, they are not *identical*; and by inattention to the precise import of the terms, surety, legal representative, in their application to Christ. Here truth, as it was formerly observed, has been pushed into error. Mr. Bennet, indeed, while contending that "Christ is to be regarded in the light of a voluntary victim, as having undertaken a legal responsibility on behalf of sinners, submitted to the judicial effects of their sins against God, and brought in everlasting righteousness, *in a public capacity*," denies that he is to be regarded, strictly and literally speaking, in the light of a legal representative, substitute, or surrogate; i. e., "one," he says, "who in law sustains the person, and acts in the name and place of others; so that his acts are to be legally construed and received as theirs." He represents it as Antinomian doctrine to contend "for such a federal and legal union between Christ and the elect, as to render them *one person* with him, in all his covenant engagements, and mediatorial performances, in virtue of which all the blessings of salvation are so theirs in him, that they have a righteous claim upon God for them. When it is said that Christ was made a sin-offering for us, and that he has entered for us into the heavenly sanctuary, the words do not mean," he says, "that he sustained the character of our legal representative, and that we in him either were made a sin-offering, or entered within the veil; but that, in both cases, he acted

in a public character, and sustained official capacities, the beneficial effects of which were to terminate in the salvation of all believers."*

Mr. Bennet maintains, that the terms referred to, viz., legal representative, surrogate, surety, &c., are never applied to Christ in the Scriptures; "nor is any such meaning," he adds, "adopted in the sacred writings with respect to the mediatorial engagements and work of Christ." The propriety of the use of the terms obviously depends, in a very considerable degree, upon the sense attached to them. I see no reason for rejecting them, which would not lead to the abandonment of the term "justification," as expressive of the acceptance of a sinner with God. I cannot join Mr. Bennet in his wish to see them discontinued. They constitute the most appropriate phraseology that can be employed, though it is absolutely necessary to remember that they must be analogically, and not literally understood: since the relation which Christ sustains to believers, is *by no means identical with that which a true and literal representative, in a human court of judicatory, sustains to the person represented by him.* It is here, as in the case of Divine and human justification, where, as we have seen, the analogy existing between them, is to be seen in the consequences of the act, rather than in the act itself. *The elect enjoy the benefit which results from the work of Christ, as if he were literally their legal representative,* (on the principle described, and therefore he is very correctly denominated their surety,) as the justified man participates in the consequences of justification, as if justification were the act of pronouncing him righteous, or were literally making him so. The consequences of not making this distinction, are baneful in the extreme. There is a degree of approximation, which we cannot but deplore, towards the wild and shocking system of Antinomianism, in the case of certain excellent men and writers; and this is to be mainly ascribed, if we are not greatly mistaken, to the fact of their having too completely identified the relation in which the Saviour stands to his people, with that of a human legal representative. And, when this identi-

* Vide Gospel Constitution, pp. 117, 118.

fication is completely made, it is difficult to see how it is possible to escape the conclusions which Antinomians draw from it. For, if there were a real commutation of persons in the case of the elect and Christ, if he endured the curse of the law as their literal representative, and if they are to be regarded as having legally borne it in him; how could they with justice be called to suffer it? How could their deliverance be an act of grace? Might they not demand their discharge? And, further, if Christ obeyed the law, as their literal representative,—if they are to be regarded as having legally rendered obedience in him, how can they be required to yield personal obedience? Surely, if, as a literal legal representative, Christ has performed the service which, in the eye of the law, we owed to the moral Governor, the debt is absolutely discharged; so that the latter can no more, having agreed to accept of the substitute, require it a second time of us, than he could inflict a second time the sentence of the law.

On the other hand, if the terms of which we have been speaking are to be understood analogically; if Christ is the surety of his people, because they participate in the benefits and blessings of his work, *as if he legally represented them*; if his righteousness does not *literally* pass over to them, and is not legally counted to them in any sense which is to be distinguished from treating them *as if they possessed it*; if all that really passes over to them is the result of that work; and, finally, if this result passes over to them, not on the Antinomian principle of a legal commutation of persons, but on the principle illustrated by Mr. Bennet, viz., that the mediatorial engagements and work of Christ, constitute a moral basis for the extension of holy benevolence to such as were in themselves both worthless and wretched, then salvation, in all its parts, is of grace; deliverance from condemnation is altogether a merciful deliverance; no transgressors, not the elect, even if they know themselves to be such, can claim it. They cannot talk, as some have done, of having a price in their hands to purchase it; but of a glorious work to plead, which has so fully satisfied the justice of God, and sustained the

efficiency of his law, as to permit their salvation, but not to require it; and they will, consequently, receive the blessings they implore, with those transports of gratitude, blended with profound humility, which cannot fail to be inspired by the self-abasing consciousness, that the blessings of eternal life have been conferred on those who deserve eternal death.*

In concluding this part of the subject, I would only add, that the views which have been presented in the preceding pages, seem essential to the production of that humility of character, without which all professions of religion are but as "sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal." It is manifest, that the Antinomian scheme of doctrine does not produce this state of mind. We cannot associate much with its adherents, without feeling that the spirit of the sect is the very reverse of that of the publican. I do not, I confess, wonder at this. The fact cannot well be otherwise. If a person believes that the elect are so completely one with Christ, and have been so from eternity, that they cannot be considered apart from him, —that in law they are literally regarded as having done and suffered all that was done and suffered by Christ, I do not wonder that, taking, in his approaches to the throne of the heavenly grace, the important fact, that he is one of the elect, for granted; or, believing it on insufficient evidence, he should assume the tone of one who regards salvation as his due. If an approximation towards the system could lead the excellent Bishop Hopkins to utter such language as the following, what must be the full effect of the entire system upon the indiscriminating mass who profess it in the present day? "They," i. e. believers, "can plead, Lord, here is a full price, the pre-

* I must particularly request the reader to remember—for I feel that, in reference to this point, I am in danger of being misconceived, and possibly misrepresented—that my objection is not against the terms "surety, legal representative," &c., but against the undue extension of their meaning; against "moulding and squaring gospel truths and doctrines, by human measures and models." Divine justification, and suretyship, are analogous to human justification, and human suretyship, but are not identical with them. "There is a resemblance," to adopt the language of Howe, "but not an exact and entire correspondence." The blessings which result from them are the same; but the process and the relation are only analogous.

cious blood of thine own Son. It was thy own free grace that bestowed him upon us, who is such a boundless treasure. But, being installed in that, *we no longer desire to deal with thee upon terms of grace*; but upon most severe, rigorous, and strict justice. What mercies we have had, were purchased for us by this price; what sins we have committed, were satisfied for, for us, by this expiation; and, therefore, we stand acquitted in law. Thus may those who have part in this heavenly treasure, make up their accounts with a great deal of confidence, when others, that have nothing to discharge their debts withal, shall be cast into prison, whence they shall never return."*

How different, radically different, the language of David! "Have *mercy* upon me, O God, according to thy *loving-kindness*: according to the multitude of thy *tender mercies* blot out my transgressions." Thus David desired to deal with God upon terms of grace; Bishop Hopkins on terms of strict justice! Which was right, the psalmist, or the prelate?

* Pratt's edition, vol. iii. p. 101.

LECTURE XVI.

JUSTIFICATION.

THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION.

THE atonement of Christ, as we have seen, has laid a foundation sufficiently solid and ample in itself, to secure the salvation of all men; yet all men are not in a state of salvation. There remains something to be done by the sinner, ere he can possess scriptural ground to hope that God will treat him as if he were a righteous person. "What then is it?" Or, to put the inquiry in another form, "In what way do we become so personally interested in the mediation of the Son of God, as to warrant us to expect, on the ground of the Divine promise, that those exalted blessings, which are conferred upon men as the reward of his infinitely meritorious work, will be as certainly enjoyed by us, as if that work had been our own?" This is obviously an infinitely important question, and a question to which an answer must be sought for in Divine revelation alone. None but that God who provided the remedy can inform us how far its influence is to extend. None but the great Being who devised and accomplished that glorious scheme, which renders it possible for him honourably to extend mercy to the guilty, can teach us to whom he will grant it, and on what conditions it will be bestowed. We may form conjectures upon the subject; we may exercise our reasoning powers with the utmost degree of vigour; but reason and conjecture must be utterly at fault here. To them it is no disparagement to affirm, that they can give us no direction. The proper work of God can be performed only by God. To Divine revelation, therefore, we at once repair.

Our first object must of course be, to ascertain what is the scriptural answer to the question proposed a short time ago, viz., "What is the medium of personal and saving interest in the mediation of Christ?"

On this point nothing can be more explicit than the statements of Divine revelation. "Therefore," says the apostle Paul, (Rom. iii. 28,) "we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." And this he declares, let it be observed, at the conclusion of a long and a logical argument, expressly intended to show what, in the very nature of the case, must be the exclusive way in which transgressors can obtain acceptance with God. The chain of the argument is as follows. None can be justified by works, because all have sinned. If the blessing should ever be attained by transgressors, it must be enjoyed on the ground of a righteousness received, and not a righteousness performed: and, since the righteousness cannot be received by works, because that would lay a ground for boasting, "we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law."

The same doctrine is taught, also, at the conclusion of the chapter. "Seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." Again, in the 3rd chap. of Gal. 8th verse: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they that be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." To the same effect, also, is our Lord's language, (John iii. 16,) "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" to which we may add the words of the commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

That faith is the means of justification is further proved by those passages which exhibit it as the hand, so to speak, which receives the righteousness of the Redeemer—or brings the sinner into that state in which he is treated as if he were a righteous man, on the ground of the Redeemer's perfect

work. "The righteousness of God without the law is witnessed, &c.—even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." (Romans iii. 22.) It is again proved by all the passages which state that faith is counted to the believer unto righteousness. "Abraham believed God, and it," (i. e., his believing, in the sense explained, p. 260.) "was counted unto him for righteousness." "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." No doubt, then, can be entertained in reference to the doctrine of Scripture on this point. Faith is, beyond all question, the means of justification. It will, then, be necessary to inquire into the nature of faith, and into the connexion which exists between faith and justification.

I.—WHAT IS FAITH?

I am disposed to define faith as the credit which is given to "the record of God concerning his Son"—its meaning, and evidence, and glory, being unveiled to the mind by the Holy Spirit. The latter part of the definition is not indeed essential to it; and, therefore, its strict logical accuracy cannot perhaps be maintained. Faith, strictly speaking, is the belief of the gospel. The mode in which we attain to a spiritual perception of its meaning, &c., does not modify the credit we give to it. Faith is *faith*, whatever be the manner in which the knowledge of the truth which it receives is obtained. Now, the latter part of this definition merely exhibits the agency to which all correct views of Divine truth are to be ascribed. It cannot, therefore, be regarded as essential to the definition of faith; and, if not essential, it must be allowed that, logically considered, it is improper to retain it. Yet, as it is adapted to guard against one class of mistakes upon this important subject, I am not prepared to throw it out of the definition.

When I say that faith is the belief of the gospel, attaching

to the term "belief" the sense which it ordinarily bears, it may be necessary to add, that I mean, of course, the belief of the gospel, *as rightly apprehended and understood*; for otherwise it is not the belief of *the gospel*. Suppose the report of some remarkable transaction were brought to us by a friend, and that we, through dulness of hearing, or misapprehension of the meaning of some of the terms employed, totally misunderstood the nature of the transaction,—could it be said, with any propriety, that we believed the report? Most assuredly not. We might, indeed, repose confidence in our friend, that he was stating what he conceived to be the truth. We might further believe, that a transaction, such as that which we had falsely conceived to have happened, had really taken place; but it would be a gross abuse of language to say that we believed *the report of the real transaction*. Nothing can be more manifest than that a correct apprehension of the meaning of the testimony, is essential to the exercise of faith in it.

Similar remarks may be made in reference to faith when the word is used, as it frequently is, in a more extended sense. Strictly speaking, faith supposes a testimony, and is the credit we give to testimony. The term is, however, constantly used to express the confidence we repose in the correctness of a proposition, even though its truth does not rest upon testimony. Thus, we are said to believe that the whole is greater than its part; and, that God exists; though we have no testimony, strictly speaking, in support of either of these propositions. We have, indeed, what we call evidence for their support;—reasons for believing them; and these reasons, being considered by us as so many testimonies to the truth of the propositions, we give to the confidence which we repose in them, the name of faith.

Now, when the word "faith" is used in this comprehensive sense, and we are said to believe any proposition, the import of the phrase is, that we give credit to the *truth which is really contained in the terms of that proposition*. It is the *meaning*, in short, that is believed; so that if the proposition is not understood, it is not believed. We may, indeed, give credit to something; but, if that something were arrayed in a

correct verbal dress, it would be found to be a proposition very different from the one which we are said to receive.

The one testimony of the gospel involves several propositions, and faith, in harmony with the preceding remarks, is the belief of the *meaning* of these propositions. It is the credit which is given to them, when they are properly apprehended and understood; and since they are never understood without Divine influence, (for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned,) faith, as it is stated in the definition, is the credit given to these propositions—their meaning, evidence, and glory being unveiled to the mind by the Holy Spirit.

Should it be alleged, that since the gospel is the testimony of Him who cannot lie, we, without understanding, may be said to believe it, because we exercise confidence in him that all which he says must be true, and so that the gospel must be true, I would answer, that if this statement does not exhibit a distinction without a difference, the belief of which it speaks is rather belief in God, than in the gospel. Faith, however, is not the confidence we repose in the Divine veracity, but the credit we give to what the Divine Being reveals to us. It is, in short, the belief of the gospel. Hence it is represented, by the apostle John, as a receiving of the witness, or record, which God hath given of his Son; "while the ungodly are said to 'make God a liar, *because* they receive not the record which he hath given of his Son.'" The same view also of the nature of faith is presented to us by the terms of the commission: "Go ye forth," said our Lord, "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth,"—believeth what? manifestly the gospel,—"*shall be saved.*" Besides, the mighty influence which is ascribed to faith in the inspired volume, proves that it is not merely a general confidence in the Divine veracity, but the reception of the gospel itself as true. It is what God says to us—the paramount and infinitely important declarations which proceed from him,—exhibiting our character, our danger, and the only way of escape—all of which are brought into contact with the mind, and

made to bear upon it with resistless force by faith, (for faith derives its influence from the truth to which it gives credit;) it is these declarations, and not a mere confidence in the Divine veracity, that accomplishes such mighty moral wonders in the experience and upon the characters of men. On this, as well as on other accounts, I cannot but regard the statements of those, who represent faith as though it were trust or confidence in the Divine Being generally speaking, or a disposition to receive any thing which God may testify, rather than as the actual reception of what he does testify, as unfounded and injurious. Faith must be the reception of something which God testifies, and because he testifies it, or it would not answer the purposes of moral government to connect with it the enjoyment of the blessings of salvation.

To have faith is, then, to believe the *meaning* of the gospel; and, consequently, faith cannot exist where that meaning is not understood. Now this meaning is not understood by any, to whom the gospel does not appear possessed of unrivalled importance, and unspeakable glory; and, since it is in all cases the Holy Spirit that causes it to appear in this light, I have ventured to define faith, "The belief of the gospel, its meaning, evidence, and glory, being unveiled to the mind by the special influence of this Divine agent."

In further elucidation and confirmation of the foregoing statement, viz., that faith includes in it a belief of the meaning of the gospel, I refer with much satisfaction to the following passages from a modern writer. "It is an absolute absurdity to say that a meaning can be believed without being understood; and, therefore, nothing that has a meaning can be believed without being understood. There are many nominal Christians in the present day, who would be astonished and hurt if their Christianity were doubted, who evidently attach no meaning to the words, judgment, eternity, and justification by the faith of Christ. Can these be said to believe? Are there not many, who can speak and reason orthodoxly and logically on the doctrines of the gospel, and yet do not understand the urgency of these doctrines in application to their own soul? These do not believe the meaning of the gospel,

surely. And are there not many, who, mistaking the whole scope of the Bible, see in it merely a list and a description of duties, by the performance of which a man may recommend himself to the favour of God? Those who believe this, believe their own vain imagination, and not the Bible." "The Jews believed in the Divine authority and inspiration by which Moses spoke, they had much more reverence for his name and honour than the great bulk of professing Christians have for the name and honour of Christ;—and yet He who knew the thoughts of the heart, declared that they did not believe Moses; for, says Jesus Christ, 'had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me; but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?' He does not mean here to question their belief that God had indeed spoken by Moses; but to deny their belief of Moses's meaning. They did not understand Moses, and, therefore, they could not believe him;—they believed their own interpretations of his law, not his own meaning of it."

"I may understand many things which I do not believe, but I cannot believe any thing which I do not understand, unless it be something addressed to my senses merely, and not to my thinking faculty. A man may with great propriety say, I understand the Cartesian system of vortices, but I do not believe in it. But it is obviously impossible for him to believe in that system without knowing what it is. A man may believe in the maker of a system without understanding it, but he cannot believe in the system itself without understanding it. Now there is a meaning in the gospel, and there is declared in it the system of God's dealings with men. This meaning and this system must be understood, before we can believe the gospel."*

In the further prosecution of this subject, it may be expedient to refer to some of the mistakes, as the author regards them, which have been committed by various writers on the subject of faith. By this means we shall be enabled to exhibit more distinctly what we cannot but deem the scriptural

* Erskine's Essay on Faith, pp. 25—29.

notion of faith, by bringing it into the light of contrast with others. These mistakes may be divided into two classes. In the first class the error is one of defect; in the second, of redundancy. Some writers, it is apprehended, include too much, —and others too little, in their statements of the nature of faith.

1st. There are writers whose statements of the nature of faith are essentially defective. Amongst these may be included,

First, Those who represent it as an assent to the great facts of the gospel,—thus practically forgetting the important sentiment, that there can exist no saving faith where the scriptural import and moral glory of these facts, are not clearly discerned, and powerfully realized. This is the extreme to which Sandemanianism tends, if it has not exactly reached it. The more spiritually minded advocates of this system may not have proceeded so far into the frigid zone of Christianity; yet, that some of its adherents have done so, is unquestionable. Nor is it to be wondered at. Believing, as they do, that the doctrine of gratuitous justification would be overturned, were they to allow that any thing approaching to spiritual feeling enters into the nature of faith, it is not surprising that they should carry their efforts to strip it of holiness, to the point of denying that it contains any thing more than a bare and naked assent to the facts of the gospel. Such a representation, however, is doubly defective; for,

In the first place, true and saving faith is more than *assent* to the gospel. It is not necessary to deny that the term “assent” is ever used as equivalent in meaning with faith, since it is impossible to doubt, that it is most commonly employed to denote a state of mind in which an individual does not care to rouse himself to the effort of contradicting a proposition; and such a state of mind must not be identified with believing a proposition. It is both unauthorized and dangerous to adopt the phraseology on which we are now animadverting.

Unauthorized; for we have no warrant for it in Scripture. The New Testament does not say, that if we *assent* to the gospel, but that if we *believe* it, we shall be saved. How is

it that they, who are in the habit of employing this phraseology, do not shrink from the thought of altering terms which were dictated by the Spirit of God?

Dangerous; for it is powerfully adapted to foster that spirit of self-deception, which beguiles so many to their final ruin. When a minister tells his congregation, that if they assent to the gospel they shall be saved, he may doubtless mean that if they believe the gospel, they shall be saved; but, then, why does he not say so? Why, without necessity, does he employ language at variance with what an infallible, a Divine teacher has sanctioned?—language which can scarcely fail to mislead many who hear him, and which is in itself adapted to mislead all? If he does not intend to intimate that any thing short of the enlightened and unfeigned belief of the gospel will bring a sinner into personal union with the Saviour, the question returns, “Why, then, does he continue the use of such equivocal phraseology?” If, on the contrary, he really designs to teach, that a man who does not actually reject and contradict the gospel, though he may not sincerely believe it, is in a state of salvation, he perverts the Scriptures altogether: and, let his intention be what it may, the phraseology adopted by him, can scarcely fail to operate unfavourably, both upon himself and others;—to induce, if frequently employed, a partial forgetfulness of the important sentiment, that nothing short of that entire and unfeigned belief which brings the truth into contact with the soul, which enables the mind to feed upon it, and so to incorporate it into the spiritual system, as that it shall prove the source of purity, and self-denial, and watchfulness, and activity, can be of any avail to an individual, either in this world, or that which is to come.

In the second place, saving faith includes in it not only more than *assent* to the great facts of the gospel, but more than a mere *belief* of those facts. There are, indeed, many who do not allow this,—who cannot persuade themselves that any unconverted man can truly believe the great doctrines of the Saviour’s divinity, for instance, his incarnation, atonement, intercession, &c. It were impossible, say the objectors,

that they should remain unaffected by these solemn and glorious truths, if they really gave credit to them. I am constrained to think differently. I see no difficulty in supposing, and no reason whatever to doubt, that, as far as an unconverted man can understand the gospel, he may believe it. He has, indeed, no spiritual knowledge of the gospel,—no proper conception of the import of its doctrines, of their unrivalled glory, and infinite importance; and, of course, he has no faith in reference to these things. But to say that unconverted men have no knowledge of the facts of the gospel,—no acquaintance with the theory of Divine truth in general,—is to affirm what universal experience contradicts. Now, if they possess knowledge, why not faith? Why may they not believe the facts of the gospel, as these facts stand in the view of their minds, as well as understand them? They are not more incapable of faith than of knowledge; for “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God—neither can he *know* them, for they are spiritually discerned.” I see no reason whatever to suppose that certain writers, who have ably advocated some of the doctrines of the gospel, while, alas! they have given us little reason to hope that they were regenerated men, had the consciousness of hypocrisy in what they were doing,—were the false advocates of sentiments which in no sense they believed. Why should it be doubted that their faith was of equal extent with their knowledge? But, though possessing both, they were not saved by either, because after all they did not know, and consequently could not believe, **THE GOSPEL**; since to have faith, as we have seen, is not merely to believe the facts of the gospel, but the meaning of the gospel; it is to give credit to the gospel, *as it appears* to an individual whose mind has been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to perceive its unrivalled glory, and its infinite importance. Nothing but faith in the gospel *thus understood*, carries with it any sanctifying influence upon the heart. The mere belief of the facts of the gospel will no more sanctify, than a mere knowledge of the theory of the gospel. Both are vain, uninfluential, profitless.

II. Secondly, there are writers who, in their statements of the nature of faith, err by redundancy, instead of defect. In this class may be placed,

First, those who contend that assurance, or an unwavering confidence of personal acceptance with God, enters into the nature of faith; so that if a person hesitates to appropriate the language of the apostle, and to say, in all that fulness of meaning which a Calvinist attaches to the words, "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me," he is destitute of the faith of God's elect.

Much ingenuity and much mystification have been displayed, in the attempt to support this position; yet, it is greatly to be wondered at, that this view of the nature of faith should be entertained by any persons to whom accuracy of conception is not impossible. The following arguments, amongst others, may be urged against it.

First, The Bible contains no revelation in reference to any individual, that Christ died with the intention of saving him. The testimony of the gospel is not that Jesus Christ came into the world to save John Owen, or John Wesley, or Andrew Fuller, but to save believing sinners; and, therefore, the faith of the gospel is not the belief that John Owen, or John Wesley, or Andrew Fuller, shall be saved, but that believers shall be saved. It may, indeed, be a certain truth, that Christ died with the purpose of saving John Owen, and the knowledge of that truth may be essential to the permanent peace and happiness of John Owen; but still it is not that truth which is emphatically denominated the good news, i. e., the gospel. The tidings which appropriate to themselves that delightful epithet, are contained in the following words of our Lord: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the gospel; and, accordingly, to be a subject of faith in the gospel, is to believe this, and neither more nor less than this. It is not to believe *that I am a believer*, for that, though it be true, is not the gospel; it is to believe the good news: and it is not a part of the good news that I am a believer, but that, if such be indeed the case, I

am personally accepted of God, and that, being kept by the grace of Christ, I shall at length "appear with him in glory."

In the first act of faith it is utterly impossible that the subject of our faith, i. e., the thing believed, can be that we are in a state of acceptance with God, because that fact, if it were a fact, is not revealed; and faith is not the belief of any proposition, even though it should be true, but the belief of some truth contained in the Scriptures—the belief of God's testimony concerning his Son; and that testimony is not that we are believers,—that we shall be saved; but that Christ died to save all who put their trust in him. And, if in the first act of faith the subject of our faith, i. e., the thing believed, is not our own acceptance with God, it cannot be such in any subsequent act of faith; or, it would follow, that what we first believed was not the gospel, or that the gospel undergoes a change after we have given our confidence to it,—which is absurd. We must, in short, either make a gospel for ourselves, or admit that the primary act of faith has no foundation to rest upon, i. e., exists without a cause, before we can consistently maintain that assurance enters into the nature of faith.

There is no intention, in what has been said, to intimate that it is impossible for an individual to obtain a settled confidence of his own acceptance with God; or that the attainment is not to be eminently desired. The single fact, that the apostle exhorts to "show diligence to the full assurance of hope," proves both that it may be secured, and that it will repay the labour of acquisition. Nor is it further intended to deny, that incipient assurance *accompanies* the first act of believing; for that is admitted to be the case. It is probable, indeed, perhaps certain, that what is ordinarily called assurance, and which may exist in different degrees, is invariably proportioned to the degree of knowledge and faith. The thing denied is, that assurance is identical with faith—that it enters into the essence of faith. The thing affirmed is, that to believe that we are believers, or Christians, or in a state of acceptance with God, is a different thing from believing the gospel; that the knowledge of our own justification must be

gathered as an inference from the fact of our believing; and that it is built upon all the evidence, whether of consciousness or of experience, which exists in support of that fact. "Nothing can be more evident," says Dr. Russel, "than that whatever God calls us to believe must be already true, and therefore true, whether we believe it or not; and that before we can believe it, evidence of its truth must be given us. But it is not true that a man is a Christian, till he believe the Divine testimony; and therefore his believing that he is a Christian, or, in other words, that he is a believer, can be no part of the faith of the gospel." "Our persuasion or conviction of the fact that we are Christians, is not properly faith at all," (because not revealed.) "It is rather a knowledge of this fact, arising from our own immediate sensations or consciousness, which springs from the nature of the impressions made upon us by the general declaration of the gospel, and not from any thing like a direct testimony from heaven, respecting us in particular. When this conviction is well founded, it is the fruit of faith, and not faith itself." (Letters, vol. ii. p. 128.)

Were we not well aware how difficult it is to analyze any operation of the mind which is in the slightest degree complex, we might feel more astonishment than we do, to find Mr. John Barclay maintaining that he, and Christians in general, gather their assurance of their own justification, along with their knowledge of the resurrection of Christ, from the direct testimony of God. Why, how can he do that, seeing that God has not testified that John Barclay is justified? How can he gather from the Divine testimony what that testimony does not contain? How bring out of the Scripture what is not in it? He obviously confounds an inference drawn from the testimony of God, with that testimony itself; and practically forgets the very important fact, that however undeniable may be our deductions from Scripture, they are not Scripture. "All who believe the record," says Mr. Barclay, "are justified,"—*I believe the record*, therefore, I believe I am justified." Now, which of the three foregoing propositions stands on the direct testimony of God? Obviously

the first only. In what part of the Bible does the Divine Being testify, that John Barclay believes the record, and that consequently John Barclay shall be saved? He gathered from consciousness, experience, &c., the assurance of his own faith; and then, since the Divine testimony declares that all believers are justified, he inferred that he, being a believer, was justified.

Secondly, Assurance (i.e., in the sense in which the word is taken in this controversy) cannot enter into the nature of faith, because believers are exhorted in the word of God to seek, that they may attain it. "Wherefore, the rather, brethren," says the apostle Peter, (2 Epis. 1 chap. ver. 10;) "give diligence to make your calling and election sure," i. e., obvious, and certain, both to yourselves and others. In the same manner also the apostle Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says, "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." (Chap. vi. 11.) Now these exhortations necessarily suppose, that the persons to whom they were addressed, were not in possession of assurance in this sense, though they were not totally destitute of hope in the great salvation. And yet they were believers, having attained like precious faith with the apostles; i. e., they were exhorted to seek to attain what, according to the sentiment opposed, they already possessed, it being necessarily implied in their faith, or rather entering into its very nature.

Thirdly, Assurance cannot enter into the nature of faith, because there are many believers who are destitute of it. I am well aware that the premises here may be disputed, and therefore the argument shall be put in a different form. It is obvious, then, that we must either reject the notion, that assurance enters into the nature of faith—or deny that any who are destitute of assurance, are Christians. The latter I find it impossible to do. Not a few individuals known to me have given every evidence of conversion to God short of being able to say with steady and unhesitating confidence, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Some of the most holy, devoted, spiritually-minded persons, with whom it has been

my privilege to be acquainted, were seldom able to rise above a hope, that all would prove well with them at the last. It is surely not necessary to call the existence of real religion, in such cases, into question; though it should be admitted, that the actual state of mind described, results from mistakes in reference to some part, or parts, of Divine truth;—mistakes, however, which rather affect the comfort, than the safety, of such as are unhappily the subjects of them. It is easy for a rigid adherent of system to affirm, that all who have not assurance have not faith; but it is not so easy even for him to believe it. The necessity which, as he conceives, lies upon him to admit a dogma which would go to unchristianize so many professing Christians, arises from confounding two things which are essentially different, viz., doubting ourselves, and doubting the truth of the Divine testimony. It is possible that persons may not be confident that they have the knowledge and faith which are stated to be essential to salvation; while there exists no shadow of doubt in their minds that, if this be truly the case with them, they are delivered from condemnation. That God will save all who repent and believe, may stand in their minds as an unquestioned fact, while they have not, it may be, full confidence that they are penitents, and believers. There must be faith in the mind—and therefore their state may be safe—or they could have no confidence of the final safety of penitents and believers, for it is from faith that this confidence arises. But it does not follow, that they must possess at the moment satisfactory evidence that faith is in the mind;—at any rate, *that* faith which is connected with salvation, and which gives credit, as we have seen, not merely to the facts of the gospel, but to their supreme importance, and unrivalled glory.

LECTURE XVII.

JUSTIFICATION.

THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION CONTINUED.

HAVING shown that faith is the medium of interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, we proceeded, in the last Lecture, to inquire into its nature. On this point it was stated, that faith consists in the belief of the testimony of God concerning his Son, the spiritual meaning, and evidence, and glory of that testimony, being unveiled to the mind by the power of the Holy Spirit. This account of its nature was placed in the light of contrast with the statement of those writers who err by defect, and of those again who err by redundancy.

Among the former are to be ranked, it was said, the Sandemanians; and, among the latter, those who identify faith and assurance. In the class of writers who, on this subject, err by redundancy, I also include,

Secondly, those who represent certain affections, which accompany the belief of the gospel, as entering into the very nature of faith. It is not here meant to deny, with the Sandemanians, that there is any thing of true holiness in faith; nor need we do this to support the doctrine of justification by grace. On the contrary, as God commands nothing which is not spiritually good, and as he has commanded men to believe on his Son, there can be no doubt that faith is a holy act of the mind; but then surely it must be an intellectual act, and not an exercise of the will or affections, though it may be induced by them. The apostle, indeed, says, that we "believe with *the heart* unto righteousness;" but he obviously means to represent the faith which is connected with salvation as an unfeigned faith, in opposition to a mere verbal profession of

faith. He is not to be understood as literally affirming, that faith is an exercise of the affections; for it is not more absurd to say that we perceive with the affections, and love with the intellect, or see with the nose, than to maintain that we literally believe with the heart. There can be no doubt, indeed, that faith is influenced by the state of the heart; or springs out of that primary operation of the Spirit of God upon the mind, which is the source of every thing spiritually good in the human character.

But, to represent it as having its seat any where except in the understanding—or, as that phraseology is unmeaning,—as being any other than an intellectual act, or state of mind, is equally at variance with just views of mental science, and with the general tenour of Divine revelation. Some writers, indeed, represent faith as *a cordial or joyful reception of the gospel*; and since these words express an emotion of the heart, they maintain that faith is not a mere intellectual act, but that a degree of feeling or emotion enters into its very nature: there is no need, however, of any very extraordinary powers of analysis to show that they are mistaken. To prevent misconception, let it be observed, that I by no means mean to deny that there is an acquiescence of the heart in the gospel method of salvation, wherever the faith which justifies exists. It is fully admitted, on the contrary, that cordiality and joy must accompany the admission of the truth into the mind; but it is not necessary, surely, to represent these emotions as entering into the nature of faith. They have manifestly a different origin. Faith is produced by the *evidence*—cordiality, or joy, by the *excellence*,—of the gospel. When the Holy Spirit takes the veil from the heart of a sinner, he discerns the evidence and excellence of the gospel at the same moment. He does not believe it *without joy*, because it is infinitely excellent and important; but still the joy does not enter into the essence of the faith, any more than the faith enters into the essence of the joy. The latter is kindled by the *excellence*, the former by the *truth*, of the gospel. As the gospel is glad tidings, there must be cordiality of heart towards it when its meaning, and evidence, and importance, are made to

appear to the mind; but the act of giving credit to its truth is not modified by the nature of its tidings. Whatever be the nature of a report, the act of believing it is the same. It is not modified by the tidings it brings, be they good or bad; as the act of seeing is not modified by the objects we perceive, be they distressing or delightful. Undoubtedly the complex state of mind produced by a report, powerfully adapted to awaken feeling, is modified by the character of the report. In addition to faith there will, in that case, be cordiality, if the report announce that certain important blessings are in reserve for us; and antipathy, if it be the foreteller of disappointment and misery. Nor is it less certain that the delightful character of the report will render us prone to receive, and the opposite character to reject it. But still the mere act of believing it, if the evidence be so overpowering as to vanquish the reluctance to receive it, is precisely the same in the latter case as in the former. It is in both cases an intellectual act, and an intellectual act alone.

In reference to faith, in general, it has been said, and correctly said, to be a simple act of the mind, of which, of course, no definition can be given. We must perform the act of believing before it can be understood; and none who have performed it can be at any loss respecting its nature. Now, if any one will consult the evidence of consciousness, he must be convinced, it is apprehended, that faith is an intellectual act or state of mind; that as little of emotion enters into its nature, as into an act of judgment. Indeed, it may be doubted, whether there is so much difference between an act of judgment, and an act of faith, as is sometimes imagined. Take one of the simplest cases for the sake of illustration. A report is brought to us, that a certain individual, in certain circumstances, acted in a certain manner. We think of the character of the individual, of the circumstances in which he was placed, of the manner in which he is said to have acted, and we see, or fancy we see, that his reported conduct harmonizes with his character and circumstances. Now, is it of much consequence whether we say we *judge*, or *believe*, that the event happened? What really takes place in the mind, but

the recognition of a relation? It is generally said, that faith is built upon evidence; that we first perceive the evidence in support of a report or a proposition, and then receive it as true. It may be doubted, however, whether we have not, in this statement, words, and nothing but words. What is the evidence of which it speaks? What is it in the illustration employed a short time ago? Is it any thing more than the harmony which exists between the character, circumstances, &c., and actions of the individual in question? And, if this be correct, what is the faith which is said to be built upon this evidence, but the recognition of the harmony itself? that is, *the recognition of a relation*, which has never, I believe, been doubted to be an intellectual act or state of mind.

It will, however, be generally admitted that the term "faith," when used in relation to any but religious subjects, denotes an intellectual act merely; while it is maintained, that in the Scriptures there is a departure from its ordinary signification. In the Bible it is thought to include more than the belief of the gospel; and, perhaps, the general opinion, in reference to the additional item, is, that it consists of trust in Christ for salvation. A distinction is made between believing the doctrines of Christ, and trusting in the person of Christ; and, though it is admitted that the former is included in the latter, it is contended that the belief of the doctrines does not ripen into saving faith, until it issue in this confidence in Christ personally considered. In support of this opinion an appeal is made to those passages which represent trust in God, and Christ, as essential to salvation—to others, which speak of *receiving* Christ, and believing *in* him, &c. On these statements the attention of the reader is requested to the following remarks:—

First, It is very unlikely that Jehovah, in communicating his revealed will to men, would employ words, without necessity, in a sense different from that which they ordinarily bear. The intention of the Divine Being must have been to be understood; but what could be so likely to frustrate that purpose as to deviate, without apprising us of the fact, from the ordinary signification of terms, in the revelation which he makes to

us? There is no formal definition of faith in the whole of the inspired volume. The passage, in the epistle to the Hebrews, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" is rather a description of faith, a statement of what it does, than of what it is. We are left, therefore, without any rule to form our opinions concerning the meaning of the term, if we are not to be guided by the sense which it bears when used in reference to other matters. We are said to be justified by faith. The apostles were commanded to preach the gospel to all creatures, and to declare, that whosoever believed it should be saved. Now, if the word faith, or belief, in these and in innumerable other cases, means something very different from faith in its ordinary use, how shall we clear the language of Divine revelation from the charge of being adapted to deceive?

Secondly, There is no necessity to suppose any thing of the kind. Granting that faith in the doctrines of the gospel, and trust in Christ personally considered, are different things, yet as the latter must be inseparably connected with the former, it is by no means surprising that the sacred writers should declare "trust in Christ" to be essential to salvation, (as is obedience,) while they may not have intended to intimate, and we think did not intend to intimate, that it enters into the essence of faith. "The belief of the gospel is necessarily connected with trust in the work of the Saviour. This arises from the nature of the thing believed, which is good news, and includes promises the most interesting to us;"—"so glorious, suitable, and interesting, are the declarations and blessings of the gospel, and such the glory of the Saviour's work of which it testifies, that the belief of it must be accompanied with the relinquishment of every false ground of confidence, and with trust in the atonement for the present and final blessedness of the soul. Persuaded of the truth that salvation is to be had through Christ, the sinner comes to him, or trusts the salvation of his soul in his hands. The one perfect offering of the Son of God becomes thus the sole ground on which the mind rests its hopes of mercy." Exhortations to believe in Christ, and to trust in him, are given indiscriminately in the Scripture.

"The latter exercise is, strictly speaking, *the effect of the former*," and the two are always combined. "So long as the truth is not understood and believed, it will not be confided in; but as soon as believed, it will become an object of trust. In Scripture, faith accordingly is considered as having its immediate issue in coming to Christ; and hence is treated as the same thing. A knowledge of the unlimited bounty of Heaven, and of Jesus, as the dispenser of this bounty, is necessarily followed by an application to him. In coming to Christ, we rest our eternity on him as the foundation which has been laid in Zion, in opposition to all other grounds of confidence. This calms the mind, and inspires it with the purest principles of obedience. Having committed all to the Redeemer, we go forward in the firm persuasion that our all is safe." (Russell's Letters, vol. ii., pp. 106—116.)

Thirdly, It may be fairly doubted, I think, whether a broader line of distinction has not been made by many writers between believing the gospel, i. e., the doctrines of the gospel, and coming to Christ, trusting in him, than the truth of the case warrants. What is it, for instance, to trust in Christ that he will pardon our sins, but to believe that he will perform the promises he has made to those who apply to him? And is this any thing different from believing the promises themselves? What is it not to rest upon our own works as the ground of acceptance with God, but to believe that God will not treat any one as righteous for the sake of what he himself does, and so to derive no hope personally from that quarter, i. e., to believe the gospel? What is it to rest on the atonement of Christ as the only rock of confidence, but to believe, on the other hand, that, in connexion with his previous obedience, it constitutes the one great work for the sake of which the guilty are accepted, and so to derive from this source all our hope of salvation? I question much if the phrases, "believing in Christ," "trusting in Christ," denote more than a belief of the gospel in its application to us personally, and the latter, perhaps, hope of individual salvation as the result of faith. That relinquishment of every false ground of hope, and trust in the atonement of Christ, of which Dr. Russell speaks, seems to me to

denote ceasing to expect and to hope for salvation from the one quarter, and beginning to expect and hope for it from the other.

The faith of the gospel is, then, the belief of the gospel, understanding the term "belief" in its ordinary sense ;—a belief however, which requires for its existence the special influence of the Holy Spirit, without which the doctrines of the gospel are never understood, and, therefore, will not be believed. The difference between the faith of a real Christian, and of a mere professor, is in the subject of faith—the thing believed,—and not in the act of believing. It is not that there is joy, complacency, acquiescence of heart, in the faith of one, and none of these emotions in that of the other ; for the act of believing, like the act of perceiving, &c., must be in all cases the same. Nor does the difference consist in this, viz., that the Christian trusts or believes in the *person* of Christ, while the nominal Christian only believes the *doctrines* of Christ ; for the latter is never the case. The difference is, that the one believes *the gospel*, and the other does not. The one believes the meaning which God intended to convey in it,—the other believes the meaning which he himself has attached to it.

There can be little doubt that the conception of different kinds of faith, such as speculative and practical, historical and saving, &c., and, indeed, all the notions which have existed with reference to a difference in the act of faith itself, as put forth by a real Christian, and a mere professor, owe their existence to a desire to account for the different effects of faith on different individuals. Here are two men, both of whom appear to understand the gospel, and both profess to believe it. The conduct of one is regulated by its precepts, while that of the other is not. The conclusion has therefore been, that the latter individual believes the gospel *in the wrong way*, or has not the right kind of faith ; whereas the conclusion should have been, that he believes the *wrong gospel* ; or, in other words, that the thing believed is not the truth as it is in Jesus. No mistake can be greater than that which ascribes the difference in the results, to some difference in the faith ; understanding by the term, the act of believing. For the practical effect of faith is, in all cases, to be ascribed not to the act of believing, but to the thing

believed. I believe, we will suppose, that there are mountains in the moon; the belief is followed by no results, because the truth, to which credit is given, is not adapted to produce any. I believe that the roof of the house in which I am sitting is about to fall; I immediately rush out, because the truth credited is fitted to excite alarm, and precipitate retreat. I believe that God hath reconciled the world to himself by Christ Jesus; I rejoice, and the joy springs from the report itself. It is not to be traced to the act of faith by which it is admitted into the mind; for that is only the instrument by which, in all cases, the truth to which credit is given, is brought into contact with the mind. In vision, it is the thing seen, and not the act of seeing, which produces the effect upon the mind. Just so it is in believing. It is the truth perceived and believed, and not the act of perceiving or believing it, that effects, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, so mighty a change in the experience and character of the individual who receives it. In reference to the three cases just alluded to, it is abundantly manifest that faith is not inert in the first instance, and active in the second, because the approaching fall of the roof is cordially believed, while the existence of mountains in the moon is not cordially believed; for if there were cordiality in either case, it would be surely in the latter, and not in the former. And in the third case, though there is cordiality, i. e., though the report of the gospel is welcomed into the mind, the joy which subsequently pervades the mind is not to be ascribed to the manner of its entrance, but to the good news it brings. "The influence of faith," says Dr. Russell, "arises from the nature of the thing believed. If we credit good news, we rejoice; if bad news, we are grieved. If we believe a threatening, and are unable to avoid the suspending evil, we are afraid. If we believe the promise of a trifle, we are little affected; but if we credit that of an invaluable gift, we are quite elated; we rely on him who made it, and we expect the promised good according to his word. Thus it is the nature of the thing believed, and the concern we have in it, from which the influence of faith springs. There is an exact correspondence between the former and the latter of these, whatever be the object of

belief." And again, "All the glory and excellency of the gospel is in itself; and, therefore, ought not to be distinguished from it. The truth, then, cannot be said to be believed, unless its glory and importance be so." The difference between believers and others, lies in the different apprehensions which they have of the same object. In the eyes of one, the gospel, in its true nature, appears to be foolishness; in the eyes of the other, it appears to be full of heavenly wisdom and glory. The reason why the former deems it foolishness is, that he is governed by sin; while the latter is brought by Divine teaching to have a just apprehension of the character of God as revealed in Christ. That system with which the carnal mind is delighted cannot be the truth in its genuine purity and excellence, but a system congenial with some or other of the evil principles of the heart. To such a mind the true glory of the truth does not appear, and error is embraced in its stead. The faith of the gospel is, of course, a conviction of its truth, arising from a spiritual discernment of such a glory, wisdom, and excellence in it, as satisfies the mind that a scheme, at once so glorious in itself, and so adapted to the relations, both of God and of man, could of course have no other than God for its author." (Letters, vol. ii., pp. 102—104.)

Thus also Mr. Erskine:—"A true faith does not properly refer to the mode of believing, but to the object believed. It means the belief of a true thing; as a correct memory refers to the accurate representation of the fact remembered. It means the remembrance of a thing as it happened. When we say, that a man has a wrong belief of a thing, we ought to mean merely that he does not believe the thing which really happened. But," he adds, "is there no such thing as a wrong or false way of believing what is true? Let us question two of our acquaintances separately as to their religious belief, concerning God, and eternity, and their own duties, and their own hopes: the answers they give are, in substance, the same; and yet their paths of life are diametrically opposite: the life of the one is in harmony with the belief which he professes, the other's not. They are both incapable of deceit; how then are we to account for this difference, except we suppose that

there is a right and a wrong way of believing the same thing? This is certainly a very important question, and it seems to me capable of a very satisfactory solution. Although these persons use similar language, and appear to believe the same things, yet in reality they differ essentially in the subject matter of their belief. The one, in short, believes the gospel; the other does not."

The views thus developed of the nature of faith are of great practical importance. Let us suppose the case of an individual who professes to have received the gospel, but is manifestly not living under its influence. He is told by some, that he has not believed the gospel *aright*, or has not the right kind of faith; by others, that it is not the gospel that he believes, or that he has not those views of its excellence, importance, and glory, which are possessed by real Christians. The tendency of the former exhortation is manifestly to lead him to look into himself; of the latter, to re-examine the gospel, that he may discover the nature and source of his mistake. Now from which of these modes of procedure is he likely to derive the most good? What conceivable benefit can he gain from the former? Suppose that from self-examination he should come to the conviction, that he has not *cordially* received the truth, not mingled *love, or joy, or trust, with his faith*; would he be likely to acquire, or be in the way of acquiring, these feelings by watching and examining the exercises of his own mind? As well might a man attempt to invigorate his physical system by watching, if he could do it, the process of digestion, instead of taking food. On the contrary, if he be convinced that the gospel does not influence his mind, because some radical misconception mingles itself with his views of its nature, the conviction has a direct tendency to send him to the Bible, the only instrumental source of spiritual knowledge; and, if at all seriously impressed with reference to eternity, to the throne of grace, that God would open his eyes to behold those wondrous things in his law and his gospel, which have never been apparent to his view, and which alone can save him from the love and practice of sin. On this point I have great pleasure in introducing the follow-

ing statements, with which I most fully coincide, from the writings of Erskine, Russell, and Wardlaw. "Theological writers have distinguished and described different kinds of faith, as speculative, practical, historical, saving and realizing faith. It would be of little consequence what names we gave to faith, or to any thing else, provided these names did not interfere with the distinctness of our ideas of the things to which they are attached; but as we must be sensible that they do very much interfere with these ideas, we ought to be upon our guard against any false impressions which may be received from an incorrect use of them. Is it not evident that this way of speaking has a direct tendency to draw the attention away from the thing to be believed, and to engage it in a fruitless examination of the mental operation of believing? And yet, is it not true, that we see and hear of more anxiety amongst religious persons about their faith being of the right kind, than about their believing the right things? A sincere man, who has never questioned the Divine authority of the Scriptures, and who can converse and reason well on its doctrines, finds, perhaps, that the state of his mind, and the tenour of his life, do not agree with Scripture rule. He is very sensible that there is an error somewhere, but instead of suspecting that there is something in the very essentials of Christian doctrine which he has never yet understood thoroughly, the probability is, that he, and his advisers, if he ask advice, come to the conclusion that his faith is of a wrong kind; that it is speculative, or historical, and not true saving faith. Of course, this conclusion sends him not to the study of the Bible, but to the investigation of his own feelings, or rather of the laws of his own mind. He leaves that truth which God has revealed and blessed as the medicine of our nature, and bewilders himself in a metaphysical labyrinth." (Essay, pp. 9—11.)

"To the Saviour, as thus revealed, the Scriptures call upon all to come. Do not, then, perplex yourself with questions about the manner of believing, but consider what it is you are called to believe. Instead of disquieting yourself about the manner of coming to Christ, think on him who invites you to come to

him,—think of his atonement and the love there displayed,—think on the many proofs which have been given of his sacrifice, in his resurrection and glory; and in the many promises of salvation through faith in him. You know that you are no farther conscious of seeing an object than as it affects you; and, in like manner, you are not conscious of believing any declaration made to you, any further than as what you believe impresses you. In the former case you are not, in looking at some interesting object, thinking of the manner of your seeing it, but of the thing seen; in the latter, you are not thinking of the manner of believing the declaration credited by you, but of the thing credited. In like manner, in believing the gospel, the mind is occupied with the thing believed, and not with the manner of believing it. We cannot dwell on thoughts of the mode in which we see an object, without forgetting, in a measure, the object itself; and so, if we are engrossed with questions respecting the right mode of believing, the great truth to be believed is lost sight of; and, being so, it cannot affect us. Of course, there is no wonder that then we cease to derive peace, comfort, or purity from it. The mind is conscious of believing the gospel, just in proportion to the degree of its faith; or, in other words, in proportion to the measure in which it is affected by the truth. The great thing then is, to keep the soul fixed upon the object of belief." (Russell's Letters, vol. i., pp. 50, 51.)

"Faith, whether considered as justifying, or as sanctifying, or as imparting the hope of futurity, derives its appropriateness and its efficacy from the nature of the truth believed. From that it never should be separated in our conceptions of it; for from that it never can be separated in actual subsistence. There is this difference, amongst others, frequently observable, between the statements of the Divine word, and those of human systems of doctrine professedly founded upon it,—that in the latter there is a great deal said about the *manner* of believing,—about what faith is, as a metaphysical act of the mind,—about *how* a sinner is to believe, not as it respects the spiritual and practical influence of his faith, but as it respects the process of mind in believing;—whereas in

the former there is nothing whatever of this kind; it dwells upon the *matter*, rather than the *manner*; it teaches us *what* we are to believe, rather than *how* we are to believe it. In human systems, we have distinctions, without end, of faith into ever so many kinds, and modes, and actings, such as have often been found exceedingly perplexing to the mind of the simple inquirer. It cannot with truth be said of them, as it is said of the word of the Lord, that their entrance "giveth light unto the simple." The Scriptures, on the contrary, are occupied with the testimony itself. Of it they give a full and clear exhibition; but there are to be found in them no puzzling metaphysics about the mental process of believing it, and directions as to the manner in which that process is to be set about and effected. All is plain. The testimony is presented on the authority of God;—sinners are invited to consider and believe it,—and the practical effects are detailed by which the faith of it must be followed and manifested." (Vide Wardlaw's *Essays on the Assurance of Faith*, &c., pp. 59, 60.)

The tendency of these views of the nature of faith to send a mere nominal Christian to the gospel to discover where the defect lies,—and a real believer to the same source, that he may obtain the renewal of joy when he has lost it, constitute, in my judgment, one of their strongest recommendations to general reception. Not so, however, thinks one of the opponents of Mr. Erskine, the Rev. James Carlile, of Dublin. He says that the directions which the former gives for correcting defects in faith, are of an intellectual kind. Quoting the following passage from Mr. Erskine,—“Let the reader pause and ask himself, how far his faith is conversant with words, and how far with things. If peace, and conformity to the will of God, do not result from your faith, look again at the gospel, for you have not yet come in contact with it.” “We hear the gospel with carelessness and indifference, perhaps with scorn and indignation, or we are indolent in the enjoyment of it. There is no other mode of recovery for a mind in that state, than the contemplation of the proper objects, that is, the doctrines of the gospel;”—Mr. Carlile

says, "I will venture to say that the most pious of our older divines would have treated the matter differently; and, I conceive, more scripturally. They would have viewed a man labouring under this spiritual darkness and insensibility, as the apostles would have viewed the blind and paralytic persons in Judea, while our blessed Lord was amongst them. They would, indeed, have told him the truth respecting Jesus; they would have assured him of his mercy, his compassion, his power, his willingness to open the eyes of the blind; but the object of all their efforts would have been to persuade him to apply to Jesus himself personally by earnest believing prayer; not merely to bring his mind in contact with the truth, but his heart with Jesus. And, if he still complained of his blindness and insensibility, they might, indeed, have cautioned him against erroneous views of Christ; but still the burden of their exhortations would have been, Continue in prayer, go to him again and again, keep by him, wait his time; and they would have assured him of being heard and answered at last. And, when they saw him thus looking to Jesus, praying to him, trusting in him, waiting on him, they would say, not that he was enjoying the fruits of his faith, but that he was exercising, or, as they sometimes expressed it, acting faith on Christ; and when, in answer to his faith and prayers, they saw him advancing in spiritual light, and peace, and comfort, they would then have said, Now are you enjoying the fruit of your faith." (Pp. 7—9.)

On this statement I remark,

First, That the comparison instituted between the blind paralytic, and an individual in the case supposed by Mr. Carlile, is obviously a most unfair one. There is not so broad a line of distinction between a sinner's coming to Christ, trusting in him, &c., and believing the testimony of God concerning him; as between this paralytic's crediting the reports of the power of Christ, and going to him for a cure.

Secondly, I observe that the language of Mr. Carlile seems to imply that peace, and comfort, and joy, &c., are not necessarily experienced *in believing*, but that they are sovereign gifts which God may withhold, and sometimes does withhold,

though he usually, and always ultimately, bestows them as the reward of faith. He represents a sinner looking to Christ, praying to him, trusting in him, waiting on him, and yet as being destitute of spiritual light, peace, and comfort; but as finally brought to enjoy these in answer to his faith and prayers. Now, if no more were meant by all this than that true faith, which receives the gospel as far as it is understood, may not, at its commencement, in consequence of remaining darkness, bring all that peace to the mind which brighter discoveries of Divine truth will originate, no fault could be found with the statement. That it does not do this, is strictly accordant with the nature of things. But this, I apprehend, is not Mr. Carlile's meaning. He thought, with some of the old divines, that God comforts believers by a direct and sovereign act of power, so that if they did not venture to say that comfort might be enjoyed *without faith*, they did believe the converse of this, viz., that faith may be possessed *without comfort*. I have long regarded this as a mistaken notion, and, in its practical influence, a very injurious one. Spiritual light, and comfort, and joy, are doubtless to be ascribed to God. But then he does not originate them in the minds of men in a manner which is at variance with his usual mode of proceeding. It is his general practice to work by means. In the infinite multitude of changes and effects, in the material and the spiritual world, which are all to be traced to him, I can only fix upon two that can be ascribed to his direct agency,—the creation of the material universe, and the new creation of a soul to God. In both these cases, the idea of instrumentality, in my view of the case, is utterly excluded. Every where else instrumentality is quite apparent. God enlightens us by means of the sun; he nourishes us by means of food. In the spiritual world he illuminates, and sanctifies, and comforts, and makes us meet for heaven, by means of Divine truth. And the object which the means are intended to secure, is united with the use of these means, in indissoluble bonds. We cannot, on the one hand, have the light, and purity, and joy, of which we have just been speaking, without the belief of the truth; nor can we, on the other hand, believe the

truth, without the enjoyment of these blessings. There must be some defect in the views, or in the faith, probably in both, of that man who has no spiritual light, comfort, and joy. The proximate cause of the defect is here. Nothing can be more unquestionable than the statement of Mr. Erskine, that if peace and conformity to the will of God do not result from the professed faith of an individual, his mind has not come in contact with the gospel; and there is no possibility of bringing him out of that state, but by bringing him into contact with the gospel; and that if the influence of the gospel upon the heart and conduct of an individual be but partial, there is no way of recovering him from that state, but by bringing his mind more entirely into contact with the gospel. It is always well to guard against using language improperly strong; yet I am not sure we may not say that, constituted as the mind of man now is, there is no other mode of recovery which it is competent to God himself to adopt. Omnipotence, we admit, cannot make us happy without holiness; is it less difficult, I would ask, the present constitution of the mind remaining, to render us joyful without something to rejoice in? that is, without a spiritual and believing apprehension of the gospel.

In dealing with the consciences of men, it is of vast importance to show them that the proximate or real cause of any deficiency of spiritual light, comfort, and joy, or the total want of it, is in themselves, in the neglect of duty on their part; or how shall we fix a sense of guilt in their consciences? To show that open transgressors, for instance, are destitute of holy perceptions and holy feelings, because they neglect the duty of believing on the Son of God;—that believers have less knowledge and less enjoyment than it is desirable for them to possess, because they do not receive with such unwavering confidence, or contemplate so steadily and perseveringly, or with a spirit so humble and teachable, and ardently desirous of instruction and spiritual good, those blessed truths which are the life and vigour of the soul, as it becomes them to do. In all cases this is the proximate cause; it is a cause in the individual himself, and for the existence and influence of which he stands guilty before God. No doubt, there is a

more ultimate cause, the neglect of prayer, in consequence of which Divine influence is not imparted; and a more ultimate cause still, in that sad depravity of our nature which leads to the neglect of prayer. But still these causes are all in the individual himself, and so fix guilt upon him. But, according to Mr. Carlile, this is not the case. The sinner, according to him, looks to Jesus, prays to him, trusts in him, waits upon him, and still does not enjoy as yet the fruits of faith in spiritual light, and peace, and comfort; that is, in other terms, the sinner has exhausted his duty, and yet does not obtain that which he is commanded to exercise continually; for the Divine precept is, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice." On what ground, then, can we charge guilt upon him? On the other hand, if it be the case that Jehovah illuminates, and sanctifies, and comforts, and carries on, in short, the whole work of salvation in the hearts of men by instrumentality, or means, which always lead to the result when rightly employed, we may affirm with confidence that a sinner is not saved, and that a believer is not eminently sanctified, because they do not use those means at all, or do not use them aright, in the use of which alone God imparts the blessing.

It is a misrepresentation, on the part of Mr. Carlile, of Mr. Erskine, or at least of Mr. Erskine's sentiments, to allege that the only directions which he gives for correcting defects in faith are of an intellectual kind. What is to hinder Mr. Erskine, according to the system which he adopts, from exhorting the sinner, while he tells him that his heart has not come into contact with the gospel, to look to Him who opens the heart of man to receive Divine truth aright, in earnest and fervent supplication, for that influence which will bring the gospel to bear, with omnipotent force, upon his mind? At the same time, it is to be wished, that there had been more of this kind of exhortation in this devotional, eloquent, acute, but, in many respects, imperfect and confused production of Mr. Erskine's pen. Mr. Erskine appears to me to approach rather too nearly to those who, in their rigid adherence to system, will not exhort a sinner to pray for Divine influence, be-

cause it is only the prayer of faith, which at present he is supposed not to possess, that God can hear. Now, I admit the truth of this latter sentiment; but who shall say when the first dawnings of faith begin to exist in the mind? If there be any feeling on the part of an individual that all is not well with him, who shall say that the Spirit of God is not at work with his soul? Why negatively forbid such a man to pray, by not urging him to it? While directing him to the Scriptures, as the source of all spiritual illumination, how can it be wrong to remind him, (what, indeed, so obviously proper and necessary?) that, if his prejudice and depravity be not counteracted by the mighty agency of the Spirit of God, they will blind his mind to the meaning of the Scriptures, and so prevent their influence upon him; and to urge him, by that consideration, to seek the exertion of that agency? The effect is likely to be good. The exhortation, while it humbles, will console him. It will foster the rising spirit of dependence and faith; and who shall say that his petitions for direction, though he may have but a very imperfect conception of the way of acceptance with God—knowing and feeling scarcely any thing else than that he is a sinner, ready to perish—will not obtain acceptance? “The sacrifice of the wicked which God abhors,” is that of the man who has no humbling consciousness of ill desert,—who deliberately places himself, in the presence of the Eternal, on the ground of merit, not of mercy. Such sacrifices he must needs abhor.

The sentiments of the writer (Mr. Carlile) to whom I have more than once alluded, are as follows:—that trust, reliance, or confidence, enters into the essence of faith,—that belief of any statement is called faith only when founded upon trust, or reliance, on the veracity of some person on whose authority the statement is believed,—and that, accordingly, the very commencement, or dawning of faith in the soul, is trust or reliance upon the veracity of God, producing belief of his declarations in the holy Scriptures. In this he differs from some of the older writers, though professing to agree with them, because he says he comes to the same conclusions with them. “They began,” says Mr. Carlile, “with the belief of

the truth, which they regarded as the initiatory or lowest act of faith; from which they proceeded to trust or reliance on Jesus Christ." He supposes that trust or reliance on the veracity of God, is pre-supposed in any belief that can be denominated faith. The great difficulty, then, under which this system labours, is to find a basis for this trust. It is not Divine revelation, since it is required in order to the reception of Divine revelation. There would, therefore, seem to be nothing for its support but that knowledge of God which is derived from the works of nature. Whether that is sufficient to produce that confidence in God which will dispose to the reception of the deeply abasing truths of Divine revelation, the reader may be left to judge.

LECTURE XVIII.

JUSTIFICATION.

THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION CONTINUED.

THE last Lecture having been devoted to a consideration of the nature of faith, we proceed now,

II. To inquire into the connexion which exists between faith and justification. On this point it is most especially necessary to guard against misconception. Some of the subsequent observations will, accordingly, keep this object more directly in view.

First, we must guard against the notion that the death of Christ has procured a relaxation of the Divine law, so that he who believes in Christ has really fulfilled his duty, and may claim the promised reward as a matter of right. This is a very gross form of error indeed,—more so, perhaps, than the delusion of those who, discarding all confidence in the atonement, rest their hope of salvation on the ground of their own works. It contains all the essential errors of this palpable and naked system of legality, with additional ones of its own. For, according to the terms in which this sentiment is couched, the law of God having abated its demand,—the moral precepts of the decalogue being abolished—and the law of faith having been substituted in its place, the believer actually performs all that God requires of him; and is, consequently, not less entitled to the reward of life than Adam would have been in case of his entire abstinence from the forbidden fruit.

And, then, it involves in it the superadded absurdity, that a radical change can take place in the precepts of a law prescribing no duties save those which grow out of the varied rela-

tions in which we stand to each other, and to that great Being who is the fountain of all created existence. That another test of fidelity besides that under which our first parents were placed might have been employed, and that another test than that of baptism might have been instituted as the initiatory ordinance under the Christian dispensation, it is easy to conceive. But, to suppose that, in the decalogue, other precepts might have been substituted for those on which hang all the law and the prophets,—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself,”—is an absurdity too gross to enter into the conception of any whose judgments are deserving of a moment's regard. The notion, indeed, that Christ has purchased a relaxation of the Divine law, in the sense which has been just attached to the words, is so manifestly absurd, that it is but rarely held speculatively, in all its length and breadth, by those who have been in the habit of hearing the gospel. Many there are, indeed, who talk of faith coming in the room of perfect obedience; but this, if the language cannot be thought to be a corrupt mode of expressing the true scriptural doctrine, takes place, for the most part, in the case of those who, being utterly in the dark with regard to spiritual things in general, attach little or no meaning to what they say.

Secondly, we are not to suppose that the efficacy of faith in procuring justification results from its own intrinsic excellence. I mean by this statement, that whatever moral excellence may be conceived to be in faith, and may really be in it, it would be a radical error to suppose that it is as the reward of that moral excellence, or on account of it, that God treats the believer as if he were a righteous person. Certain individuals, who have not just views of their character and state, but are yet sufficiently enlightened to perceive that the law of God cannot require less than that he should be loved with all the heart, and our neighbours as ourselves, have fallen into the error to which I have now alluded. They do not, indeed, exclude Christ altogether from their system, but as little do they shut out all confidence in themselves; and, therefore, if they form any definite conceptions at all upon the subject, their

sentiment is, that faith being the root of all obedience, though it is not actual obedience, is rewarded by God, in consequence of what Christ has done, with eternal life. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that, if they had an adequate sense of their utter unworthiness before God, nothing more would be needed to convince them that, when eternal life is bestowed upon the guilty, it cannot be imparted as the reward of the sinner's obedience, or of the sinner's faith; but entirely and exclusively as the reward of the Saviour's work;—that this constitutes the only ground on which it is safe to the Divine government to bestow it, though faith brings them into the number of those to whom the promise of it is given.

We have shown that the work of Christ is the exclusive ground of a sinner's justification; he cannot, therefore, be treated as if he were righteous on account of the moral excellence of his faith. The two things are utterly incompatible with each other—as truly and as directly so, as the doctrine of salvation by grace and by works. Indeed, the sentiment opposed is the doctrine of salvation by works. It may be a less gross and repulsive form of it, but still it is the doctrine. With the grosser form of it, it is equally opposed to the declaration of the apostle, that “God justifieth the ungodly;” for although we do not concede to the Sandemanians that the language implies that, at the moment of justification, there is no vestige of any thing spiritually good in the mind—that the individual who receives the blessing, is really and literally as ungodly as the man who is living in the constant indulgence of criminal propensities;—a notion which is directly contradicted by the fact, that the former is a believer, and by the existence of all those spiritual perceptions which are pre-supposed in faith, and in the order of nature are previous to it;—it must certainly and necessarily imply that they are justified *as* ungodly;—that whatever measure of holiness there may be in faith, it is not that which attracts the blessing—not that, on account of which, or on the ground of which, it is bestowed. There, may, indeed, have been lodged in their minds, the germ of better principles and affections; yet God, in imparting the blessing, regards them as ungodly. For such, indeed,

they are; being sinners, guilty, condemned, and in danger of destruction. Men are not, then, treated by God as righteous on account of the moral excellence of their faith. Against this notion, it may be further observed, that it is not adapted to hide pride from man, to do which, seems to have constituted one of the great ends at which Jehovah aimed, in all the parts and steps of the great work of human redemption. And, let it be observed, that it would equally frustrate that end, whether justification were bestowed on the ground of a man's works, or a man's faith. Let him only be permitted to consider that ground in himself; and such is the pride and depravity of the heart, it will be impossible to prevent his imbibing the spirit of the Pharisee, "God, I thank thee I am not as other men," &c. As a measure of precaution, it will be practically in vain to tell him that the faith of which he prides himself was the gift of God—was wrought in him by the influences of the Holy Spirit, and that he ought not "to boast of what he has received, as though he had not received it." It may be true that this statement ought to extinguish every feeling of pride, but experience shows that it will not do it. He feels that *that* for the sake of which he is treated as if he were a righteous man, is in himself; and he lifts up his head in the spirit of self-gratulation and confidence, in spite of all that can be said to him.

It is easy to discover the baneful influence which the sentiment I am now opposing has had in corrupting that simple view of the nature of faith which has been presented in a former Lecture—a view which seems essential to the manifestation of the fact, if not to the fact itself, that salvation is of grace. The apostle tells us, in the 4th of Romans and 16th verse, that the enjoyment of the promises "is of faith, that it might be by grace;" an expression which at least appears to intimate that, if it had not been by faith, it would not have been, or at least would not have appeared to be, of grace. Now, if we adhere to those statements of the nature of faith which have been given, we shall see and feel the truth of this assertion. "Faith is, indeed, the intelligent voluntary exercise of the mind, but it is an exercise of the mind to which we

never in common life attach any idea of merit; and hence the reasoning of the Scripture on the difference between justification by faith, and by works. Whoever supposes that the exercise of a malefactor's mind, when he believes that the pardon sent him has the royal signature, merits that blessing? And what more merit can there be in a sinner's believing the message of reconciliation, which declares that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their trespasses?" As well might a man believe that there is a merit in his believing that the sun shines, when it is before him in its meridian lustre. The common sense of mankind tells them that there can be no merit whatever in believing the report of a credible witness. (Russell, vol. ii., p. 79.)

Such are the statements of Dr. Russell; and, though I do not think they put the case in a perfectly correct and fair point of view, since faith is an act of subjection to Divine authority. It could not be said to be the duty of the malefactor to believe that it was the royal signature that was attached to the pardon; it is the duty of sinners to believe on the Son of God: and hence believing is called the obedience of faith; though I do not think, on this account, that Dr. Russell has put the case quite fairly, it cannot be denied that, as there is a radical difference between believing the testimony, and obeying the commands of God, we are more likely to preserve the important doctrine of justification by grace untouched by presenting faith in the light in which it appears in former statements, than if we included in its nature, complacency, love, joy, and so represented it as almost another name for the whole of practical religion.

To this identification the notion we are now opposing, that faith justifies on account of its own moral excellence, has very frequently, if not mainly contributed. There is most manifest danger, that individuals who entertain this notion will be led to include as much of holiness as possible in the nature of faith. Though there might possibly appear to them some merit in believing the testimony of God, they could hardly persuade themselves that it was in its amount at all equal to the reward of eternal life. Faith was, accordingly, trans-

formed by them into practical religion; and then the propriety of connecting eternal life with it, the spirit of legality still reigning within, became in their view more apparent. "They do not see how a persuasion of the truth of the Divine testimony can save the guilty, and give peace to conscience, because they discern not the freeness of the grace of God, and have mistaken views of the nature of his salvation. In a word, they look on faith as an arduous and complicated work. This is, in fact, seeking to be justified by works of law, under the name of faith, and is but a refined way of perverting the gospel." (Vol. ii., p. 79.) Again: "Such as oppose the doctrine of salvation by grace, and yet are unwilling directly to teach that it is obtained by works, contend that faith in Scripture is to be understood in an unusual sense, and not in its ordinary meaning. They include in it most, if not all, of its effects, even every pious and benevolent disposition of heart; which is, in fact, to identify it with the complete fulfilment of the law. According to this scheme, salvation is of faith, that it might be by merit. I need not say that this is directly to contradict the doctrine of Scripture." (Page 80.)

Amongst theological writers of high and deserved reputation, there is also occasionally displayed a more anxious desire to find a high degree of holiness in faith, than I am able to sympathize with; a desire which is almost apt to beget a suspicion that they have not altogether abandoned the opinion that the moral excellence of faith has some influence, after all, in securing for the believer the important blessing of justification. I admit, indeed, as I have already done, that the medium of interest in the work of Christ must be some voluntary act of obedience to the Divine commands; for, though Jehovah is a Sovereign, he does not abandon the character and relation of moral Governor; and though the reward of his government is a reward of grace, and though the fidelity of the faithful servant is the result of grace, yet that reward will be bestowed according to the rule of moral government. I admit further, since God commands nothing which is not spiritually good, that this act of obedience must be a holy act. But why, in as far as justification is concerned, should we be solicitous to

find more of holiness in faith than is necessarily involved in this admission? If we are justified solely on the ground of the perfect work of Christ, there is nothing to prevent the justification of all men, without a single thought or act on their part, but the rectoral character and relation of Jehovah, which renders it necessary that some rule of justification should be enacted, that the justice of the Divine Being may be rendered apparent by his bestowing it upon those, and those only, who comply with that rule. Now, it is manifest that any requisition (and it must be a requisition on account of the rectoral character of God) would secure this object; it might be love, for instance: an individual might have been commanded to love Christ in order to his obtaining that interest in him which is essential in all cases to a person's being treated as if he were righteous for the sake of him. But to have required love, as the medium of interest, would have made it appear as if justification had been by works, if it had not overthrown the doctrine of gratuitous justification altogether. Since, therefore, the requisition of love, which is manifestly a work of the law—a fulfilling of the law is not necessary, it is not made the medium of interest. Something, on the contrary, which is an act of subjection to Divine authority, but which, according to the common consent of men, cannot be confounded with the fulfilling of the law, namely, faith, is constituted that medium; and thus regard is had to the character of God as the moral Governor,—justification manifestly appears to be by grace, and the interests of holiness, as we shall presently see, are perfectly secured. Now, if any act of obedience might have been made the medium of interest in Christ, the question returns again upon us, why should we be solicitous to discover any thing more of holiness in faith than must of necessity be included in every act of obedience? How difficult is it to avoid the suspicion that those who discover this solicitude have not the clearest conceptions of the grounds of justification.

There are some expressions in Dr. Dwight's Sermon on Justification which seem to me to intimate that he has felt the injurious influence of his own views of the nature of faith. In

encountering the false position, that man is absolutely passive in believing, he argues that, if this were the case, faith, so far from being praiseworthy, amiable, and capable of recommending us to God, would merit and sustain no moral character at all. He proceeds, "According to this scheme, therefore, faith and unbelief being equally and absolutely involuntary and unavoidable, can never constitute a moral distinction between men. Faith can never be an object of the approbation, nor unbelief of the disapprobation, of God. Much less can we be praiseworthy in believing, or blameable in disbelieving. Still less can we *on one of these grounds be rewarded*, and on the other punished. Least of all can we *on account of our faith be accepted* and blessed for ever; and, in consequence of our unbelief, be rejected and punished with endless misery." (Sermon 67.) Now, it is freely admitted that many of these remarks are correct, and perhaps it might not be impossible so to explain the whole of them, as to purge them of any material error in regard to doctrine. Yet I do not like the phraseology that "faith recommends us to God; that it is the ground on which we are rewarded by him; that in consequence of our faith we are accepted and blessed for ever." Nor can I approve of the statements which he afterwards makes, "that it is honourable to God to annex justification to virtue, and not to any thing of a different nature—to that attribute which is the sum of virtuous obedience." The entire language would appear to intimate that the Doctor attaches more influence to the moral excellence of faith in procuring our justification than he is himself aware of. The proper view of the matter seems to be, not that faith must be holy to procure justification, but to be an act of obedience to Divine authority; since God never commands any thing which is not spiritually good. As an act of obedience *only* can it become a medium of interest in Christ; since the rewards of God's moral government are given according to the rule of that government, though not for the sake of compliance with the rule. It might justify without holiness, if it could be obedience without it. This is not, however, the case. At the same time as justification is appointed "to be by faith,"

that is, instrumentally, "that it might be by grace," it seems necessary not to include more of moral excellence in its nature than is essentially and necessarily involved in every act of obedience to the Divine commands.

" 'Wherefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.' Its being *by grace* is essential to the very nature of the gospel; and its being *by faith* is represented as securing this essential point. There is a perfect contrariety between grace and works; but there is a perfect, and simple, and beautiful harmony between grace and faith. Justification *is* by the latter, *that it may be* by the former. This is fully brought out in Paul's reasoning, (Rom. iv. 1—8,) 'What shall we then say that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, *his* faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.'—It is impossible that words should more distinctly express the difference between two things:—and it is obvious, that the simpler the conception is which we have of faith or believing, the more fully and clearly will the meaning and the justness appear of the apostle's proposition in verse 14—'It is of faith, that it might be by grace.' Our believing the Divine testimony is the simple medium, appointed by God, of our interest in Him whom that testimony makes known as 'The Lord our righteousness.'" (Wardlaw's *Essays on Assurance*, &c., pp. 47, 48.)

Thirdly, Faith secures justification, in the opinion of many writers of great eminence, by bringing the sinner into a state of union to the Lord Jesus Christ, which union constitutes the basis on which God treats him as if he were

actually righteous. "We need not," says Mr. Fuller, "reduce faith to an exercise of the intellectual faculty in which there is nothing holy; but whatever holiness there is in it, it is not this, but the obedience of Christ, that constitutes our justifying righteousness. Whatever other properties the magnet may possess, it is as pointing invariably to the north that it guides the mariner; and whatever other properties faith may possess, it is as receiving Christ, and bringing us into union with him, that it justifies. In order to be interested in justification, and other blessings arising from the obedience and death of Christ, we must first be interested in Christ himself; for it is as having the Son that we have everlasting life. The benefits of Christ's obedience unto death require to be received in that same order in which they were given. As God first gives Him, so we must first receive him, and with him all things freely. Many would wish for the benefits of Christ's death, who yet have no desire after Christ. Like him that was nearest of kin to the family of Elimelech, they would, on various accounts, be pleased with the inheritance; but when it is understood that, in order to possess it, they must take *him* with all that pertains to him, and that this would mar their present inheritance, they give it up."

"Thus it is that justification is ascribed to faith, because it is that by which we receive Christ; and thus it is by faith only, and not by any other grace." "Thus it stands connected in the Scriptures with union with Christ: 'Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness,' &c. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' 'That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness,' &c. From these and other passages we perceive that faith justifies not in a way of merit, not on account of any thing in itself, be it what it may, but as uniting to Christ. It is that which the act of marriage is on the part of a female; by it she becomes one with her husband, and (whatever might be her former property) legally interested in all that he possesses. Having him, she has all that is his. Thus it is, that Christ being heir of all things, believers in him become heirs of God, not in their

own right, but as joint-heirs with him. And as, in a marriage union, the wealth which an indigent female might derive from the opulence of her husband, would not be in reward of having received him, so neither is justification the reward of faith, but of the righteousness which is of God, i. e., the righteousness of Christ by faith."

"Great things are ascribed to faith in a way of healing. Many of the miraculous cures performed by our Lord are ascribed to the faith of the parties. The virtue, however, proceeded not from faith, but from him. It is the same in justification. By faith we receive the benefit, but the benefit arises not from faith, but from Christ. Hence the same thing which is ascribed in some places to faith, is in others ascribed to the obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ." (*Works*, vol. vii., pp. 414—416.)

To the same effect are the statements of Jonathan Edwards. "When it is said that we are not justified by any righteousness of our own, what is meant is, that it is not out of respect to the excellency of any qualification or acts in us whatever, that God judges it meet that this benefit of Christ should be ours; and it is not, in anywise, on account of any excellency or value that there is in faith that it appears in the sight of God a meet thing, that he who believes should have the benefit of Christ assigned to him; but purely from the relation which faith has to the person in whom this benefit is to be had, or as it unites to that Mediator in and by whom we are justified." "Here, for the greater clearness, I would particularly explain myself under several propositions.

"1st. It is certain that there is some union or relation that the people of Christ stand in to him, that is expressed in Scripture, from time to time, by 'being in Christ,' and is represented in Scripture by those metaphors of being members of Christ, or being united to him as members to the head, and branches to the stock, and is compared to a marriage union between husband and wife." Having stated that it is not necessary to explain this union, he adds, "I do not desire to determine more about it than all, of all sects, will readily allow; viz., that there is a peculiar *relation* between true Christians

and Christ, which there is not between him and others; and which is signified by those metaphorical expressions in Scripture, of 'being in Christ,' 'being members of Christ,' &c.

"2nd. This relation, or union to Christ, whereby Christians are said to be in Christ, (whatever it be,) is the ground of their right to his benefits. This needs no proof; the reason of the thing, at the first blush, demonstrates it. It is exceedingly evident also from Scripture: 'He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.' (1 John v. 12; 1 Cor. i. 30.) First, we must be *in him*, and then he will be made righteousness or justification to us.' 'The union of the members of the body with the head, is the ground of their partaking of the life of the head; it is the union of the branches to the stock, which is the ground of their partaking of the sap and life of the stock; it is the relation of the wife to the husband, that is the ground of her joint interest in the estate; they are looked upon in several respects as one in law. So there is a legal union between Christ and true Christians; so that as all (Socinians excepted) allow, one in some respects is accepted for the other by the supreme Judge.

"3rd. And thus it is that faith is the qualification in any person that renders it meet in the sight of God that he should be looked upon as having Christ's satisfaction and righteousness belonging to him, viz., because it is that in him which, *on his part*, makes up this union between him and Christ. By what has been just observed, it is a person's being, according to the Scripture phrase, *in Christ*, that is the ground of his satisfaction and merits belonging to him; and a right to the benefits procured thereby. The reason of it is plain; it is easy to see how our having Christ's merits and benefits belonging to us, follows from our having (if I may so speak) Christ himself belonging to us, or our being united to him. And if so, it must be easy to see how, or in what manner, that in a person which on his part makes up the union between his soul and Christ, should be the thing on the account of which God looks on it as meet that he should have Christ's merits belonging to him." (Sermon 1st, on Justification.)

Now the attentive reader will immediately perceive that the

substantial truths so fully and ably developed in the preceding extracts, viz., that the one work of the Redeemer is the exclusive ground of justification; that justification is received not by works, but by faith, and yet that it is not bestowed as the reward of faith, but of the Saviour's righteousness;—the reader will perceive, it is imagined, that these truths, which constitute all that is of radical importance on the subject, are precisely those which have been unfolded in previous Lectures. I am constrained, however, to express the doubt I feel, whether the correctness of some of the minor statements, or, perhaps, I should rather say, of some parts of the phraseology, can be sustained. And, in the present day, when every point of evangelical truth, and when every mode of stating it, are likely to undergo a more thorough and sifting examination than any to which they have as yet been subjected, it is of more importance than some persons are aware of, not to contend pertinaciously for any form of expression which will not endure this test. With every disposition to sit down contented with the statements of these eminent men of God, I cannot deliver myself from the impression that they contain more of apparent than of real information. If the President had not unfortunately conceived it unnecessary to explain what he meant by union with Christ, it is possible that his language would have been somewhat different. Faith, he says, in substance at least, secures justification by uniting the believer to Christ, which *union* (not faith) constitutes, as he imagines, the basis of the imputation to him of the Saviour's righteousness. Now this statement obviously assumes, as the reader cannot fail to observe, that to believe the gospel, and to be in Christ, though inseparably united, are yet different things, or the latter member of the sentence would identify itself with the former.

If the phrases, "to be a believer," and "to be in Christ," are only two modes of expressing the same thing, the one statement being figurative, and the other literal, the President, in declaring that union to Christ is the basis of imputation, really says nothing more than that faith is the basis; and, further, that faith justifies because *it is faith*. Let, then, the reader examine the following passages, and ask himself

whether the two phrases, of which we are speaking, mean different things, or the same thing. "But to as many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on his name." (John i. 12.) "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, &c.,—who also were *in Christ* before me." (Rom. xvi. 7.) "If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature." (2 Cor. v. 17.) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are *in Christ Jesus*." (Rom. viii. 1.) Compare this with chap iii. 26, "to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that *believeth in Jesus*." "He that *believeth on the Son* hath everlasting life; and he that *believeth not the Son*, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) Compare with this the language of the same writer, (1 John v. 12,) "He that *hath the Son* hath life; and he that *hath not the Son* of God, hath not life." What can be more manifest than that the language of the epistle contains nothing more than a figurative statement of the truth more literally presented to us in the gospel? And hence, in the following verse, the apostle adds, "These things have I written unto you that *believe on the name* of the Son of God," &c. (Verse 13.)

Sufficient, it is presumed, has been said, to show that the expressions, "to have faith—and to have, or receive Christ—to be a believer—and to be in Christ," are only different modes, the one simple and the other figurative, of expressing the same thing. We, indeed, with a certain looseness of phraseology in which we are apt to indulge, speak of faith as the instrument by which we receive Christ, (as if believing the gospel and receiving Christ were not identical,) or by which we receive justification. But, in strict accuracy, that which faith *RECEIVES* is the truth concerning Christ. The blessing of justification is, indeed, invariably enjoyed in connexion with the reception of the truth, i. e., God bestows it upon every believer; but faith can only be said figuratively to *receive* it: and the phraseology is evidently open to the objection which Erskine brings against it, viz., that it supposes our justification to have been in existence before we believe; since

we cannot receive any thing, the existence of which is, in the order of nature, subsequent to the act of reception. In harmony with these remarks, and confirmatory of them, it is observable, that though believers are, in the New Testament, figuratively represented as being *in Christ*, they are not said to be united to him *by faith*; since that would be in effect to say that we become believers by faith. Nor are “we said to be justified by being in Christ, but by believing.”

The reader must not so misconceive me as to imagine that I entertain the slightest doubt in reference to the fact, that there exists an union between Christ and his people. The sole object has been to show, that when President Edwards tells us that faith unites to Christ, and that the union thus formed is the basis of justification, he makes a distinction without a difference, and, indeed, utters an identical proposition,—since, in ordinary Scripture style, to be a believer, and to be in Christ, mean the same thing. There are, indeed, other senses in which the phrase, “to be in Christ,” may be understood; but in neither of them would Messrs. Fuller and Edwards contend, that “to be in Christ” is the basis of imputation. A vital union, for instance, subsists between Christ and his people—an union of heart, if we may so speak. The thoughts, affections, and prayers of the Christian ascend to the Saviour; and the love, and care, and gracious communications of the Saviour, descend to him. And since Christ suffered, not for himself, but for the benefit of others,—and since the Spirit was not intended to be poured out upon all flesh, so as to bring all men to the enjoyment of the blessings of his salvation, but upon the chosen to salvation exclusively, the latter may be said to have been chosen in Christ, to have been in him, “before the foundation of the world.” It will not be pretended, however, that union in this latter sense is effected by faith. It is in one respect the cause of faith. Nor can we represent vital union, which in fact identifies itself with sanctification, as the *basis of imputation*, without endangering the doctrine of justification by faith, without the deeds of the law. What, then, is that union to Christ which, being the

result of faith, must of course differ from it, that is thus represented as the basis of imputation?

Mr. Haldane, in his late Exposition of the five first (first five) chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, seems to hint at the existence of an union which is mysterious and incomprehensible in its nature. We have heard others express a similar opinion. It is probable that Jonathan Edwards, applying his notions of the connexion which existed between Adam and his posterity, to that which exists between Christ and his people, would agree with them. I am quite free to say, that I have never been satisfied with the statements of this writer in reference to that connexion. With Principal Hill, I am constrained to think, that they "are repugnant to that distinct agency which enters into our notion of accountable beings, as essential to that character." I wish to say no more on this point, than, that it ought not to form a recommendation of any statement, that it throws unnecessary mystery around the subject to which it refers.

Most Calvinistic writers, perhaps, represent faith as effecting a legal union between Christ and his people; and they further regard this union as the basis of imputation—they illustrate it by the case of Adam. A legal union was constituted between Adam and his posterity, to serve as the basis of the imputation of his sin to them. A legal union must also, they conceive, exist between Christ and believers, to serve as the basis of the imputation of his righteousness to them. In the former case, the union is effected by the natural birth; in the latter, by the spiritual birth; or, in other words, faith is the instrument by which an individual is brought into that state of legal union to the Saviour in consequence of which the righteousness of the latter is imputed to him. Now there is much of substantial and important truth in this representation; yet it is not perfectly correct in the sense which they attach to the words they have employed. It obviously assumes what we have already denied, and venture again to deny, that the relation which Adam and Christ sustained to their respective seeds, is perfectly identical with

that of a legal representative among men; or that our notions in reference to it are to be governed by what takes place in a human court of judicature. I have long had a strong conviction that this proneness to identify Divine and human proceedings is the source of much mistake and mischief in our theological investigations; and it has been with no slight degree of pleasure that, since some of the statements contained in preceding Lectures were committed to writing, I have met with a passage in the works of the great John Howe, unobserved before, which most strikingly confirms the views I had been led to entertain. I very earnestly recommend it to the careful attention of those who have been led, by our customary and established phraseology upon this subject, to identify suretyship in Divine economies, with suretyship among men. "Much of this carnality appears about such matters when we are over-intent to mould and square gospel truths and doctrines by human measures and models; and to earnestly strive to make them correspond; that is, when we aim beyond what things will admit, to stretch (or rather to shrink and contract) God's transactions with men, unto the scheme and model of our own abstract notions and definitions, or of merely human, civil, or political economies, administrations, and transactions; such I mean as obtain among men towards one another; and so labour to have the same measures take place throughout, in reference to Divine things, as do in human. Whereby more than is needful, useful, (or indeed so much as possible to agree and quadrate,) of logic, metaphysics, and of civil or other law, is introduced into theology. *Illustrations, indeed, may be taken thence, but not strict measures. It is impossible some times they should be so.*" (Let the reader mark this.) "Divers things are taken among men in such notions as, in delivering the doctrine of the gospel, cannot have a full and adequate place; they often will not exactly agree or correspond; as if, in speaking of God's pardoning and justifying a sinner, we should take our measures of pardon and justification strictly from what obtains among men, we should find a great difference, and disagreement." And having exhibited the disparity, he adds, "Some resemblance will appear, not an exact

or entire correspondency." (Pp. 466, 467, Westley's Edition.) In harmony with this great, general, and germinating principle, it may be added, that if we take our measure of the relation of Adam and Christ to their respective seeds, from that of a human legal representative, we shall find a great difference and disagreement. The analogy is in the results of the relation. The whole world experience the effects of Adam's sin—and believers enjoy the consequences of Christ's righteousness—as if both classes were, in a literal sense, legally represented by Adam, and Christ.

If it be objected, that, unless Adam and Christ were true and literal representatives, the consequences of their actions could not extend beyond themselves, we oppose facts of every day occurrence to the incautious assertion of the objector. The instances are innumerable in which this is the case. It is an ordinary law of Divine Providence that the results of actions, both virtuous and vicious, should reach beyond the actors themselves. Moral government resorts to this arrangement, as one mode, amongst others, of effecting its own wise and merciful purposes. A nation suffers from the misconduct of its rulers; a parent entails disease, degradation, and poverty, or affluence and honour, upon his children; wide-spreading ruin is oftentimes the result of unprincipled commercial speculations. Should it be said that these effects follow in the natural and necessary course of things, it is replied, *First*, that, granting this, it still does not alter the fact, that the results of actions do reach beyond the actors themselves, when the latter do not sustain the relation of legal representatives in the strict and literal sense of the term. But, *Secondly*, it is inquired, How it came to be the natural course of things? Was not that course determined by God himself? Are not these results brought about by the agency of his providence? And does he not so arrange the course of events as that the actions of one man shall affect multitudes, that he may secure the great ends of his moral government? that he may discountenance and prevent vice, and encourage virtue? that he may render the monarch cautious and prudent? the parent watchful and virtuous, and the tradesman and merchant honest?

The facts just referred to, to which others might have been added, present us with undeniable cases, in which individuals have experienced the effects of the good or bad conduct of others,—by whom they were not, in the strict sense of the term, legally represented,—*as if they had been thus legally represented*. I do not intend to intimate, by alluding to these facts, that the relation existing between the parent and his child—by virtue of which the latter is exalted—is identical with that which is sustained by Christ to his people. The facts have been referred to for the mere purpose of repelling the objection, which they certainly do, and that most effectually. It may possibly prove to be the case, that the two relations are not so radically different as is sometimes imagined; but at present I am disposed to regard the relation of Christ to believers, as not identifying itself with that of a legal representative on the one hand, nor with that of a parent on the other. It seems more analogous to those which were sustained by Noah, and Abraham—the results of which did not altogether reach to their posterity in the natural course of things. Adam, and Christ, were rather moral, than legal, or natural heads. The disobedience of the former, and the righteousness of the latter, formed the moral ground on which the loss and the blessing are experienced. As an expression of God's displeasure against the sin of the former, the whole race suffer many of the consequences of that sin; as an expression of his high satisfaction with the righteousness of the latter, believers experience the consequences of that righteousness. The results are the same as if Adam and Christ had been, strictly speaking, legal representatives;—as the results of justification with God are the same, as if it were the same thing with justification among men;—and, on this account, and in this sense, they may with great propriety be denominated legal representatives.

LECTURE XIX.

JUSTIFICATION.

THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION CONCLUDED.

IN the preceding Lecture we have seen that faith does not justify on account of its being, through a relaxation of the Divine law, a perfect fulfilment of duty;—nor on the ground of any moral excellence which may be found to exist in it. We have seen, further, that the statements of certain eminent divines, that faith justifies, because it unites to Christ, contain more of apparent than real information, inasmuch as to believe, and to be in Christ, are only two modes, the one literal, and the other figurative, of expressing the same thing. If, indeed, by being in Christ were meant nothing more than connexion with that body, the members of which are justified, and who will be finally saved by him, then it might truly be said that we are *thus* united to Christ by faith; but then, as this union is identical with being justified, it could not be said that we are justified by virtue of union to Christ. I prefer, therefore, the following statement of the connexion between faith and justification, viz.,

Fourthly, Faith justifies by bringing an individual into that body, to every individual of which the blessing of justification is secured by the promise, and covenant, and oath of God. The statement may be thus illustrated.

The atonement of Christ was, as we have seen, a general remedy co-extensive with the evil to be removed. The whole of the human race had, by transgression, imposed a moral necessity upon Jehovah, as a righteous moral Governor, to inflict upon them the sentence of the law. From this neces-

sity, the obedience and death of his Son, evincing the excellence, and sustaining the efficiency of the law, rescued him. It permitted, though it did not of itself require, the pardon of the transgressor. It rendered it competent to him, as moral Governor, to extend the sceptre of mercy to the guilty—to pardon all, or any; and in whatever manner should appear right in his sight. Yet, as the whole race was not destined to appear in existence at once,—and as the moral Governor must act in his rectoral character during the entire period of the existence of the system, and impart the blessings he bestows *according to some revealed rule of government*, it became necessary for him to establish, and to reveal, the rule according to which these blessings should be bestowed. That rule is faith. Though all men, personally considered, deserve death, he promises, on the ground of the Saviour's work, to bestow life on all who believe the record he has given concerning him. This becomes the rule of his government, under the dispensation of mercy which has been established in consequence of the death of his Son; the rule of personal acceptance, and by which the final condition of all, who enjoyed access to the gospel, will be decided at the great day of account: "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned."

Let us carry forward our thoughts to the judgment of the great day. It is in the character of moral Governor, or Judge, that Christ will descend from heaven; and he will come "to render to all men according to their deeds"—"to judge the dead according to their works." (Rom. ii. 6; Rev. xx. 12.) Beyond all doubt, the reward which is, on that day, to be bestowed by the Judge, will be a reward of grace; i. e., it will be given for the sake of Christ alone,—his work constituting the ground on which it will be imparted; but still it will be bestowed by Christ in the character of moral Governor; and, accordingly, conferred upon those only who have complied with the rule of government; or, in other words, who have yielded that obedience of faith which the Sovereign had previously declared should place all, who did yield it, in that state in which they should be treated *as if they were righteous*, for the sake of him who really is so. Nothing is said at present

of the influence by which they are induced to yield this obedience; that is, doubtless, the special energy of the Holy Spirit—a circumstance which completes the proof that salvation is of grace. But still, though it is the Holy Spirit that enables them to exercise faith, it is *they* who believe. *They* comply with the revealed rule concerning justification, though their disposition to do this is the result of holy and gracious influence. And it is this act of compliance that introduces them into the number of those upon whom the Judge will bestow, in conformity with his promise, the rewards of his kingdom. Let the reader reflect upon the necessity which exists for his acting according to a revealed mode of proceeding; how essential it is that there should be the manifestation of equity in the awards of the great day,—of equity, (in acting according to the revealed rule of government,) as well as of sovereignty! Now, there could be no display of equity, unless something had been previously enjoined upon the subjects of the government, on their compliance with which, the moral Governor had previously declared that the blessings which result from the death of his Son, should flow to them. Let him think what would be the consequences to the moral government of Jehovah, if some sinners, at the great day of account, having complied with no rule for obtaining the blessings of the government, were taken to heaven; while others, without having broken any rule, were consigned to hell! How could it appear, in that case, that the Judge of the whole earth did right? It is otherwise now. The death of Christ has permitted the honourable exercise of mercy. God has accordingly declared, in infinite grace to men, that he will save all that believe; and at the great day he will act according to his declarations. It surely must have required some trouble to involve this plain matter in darkness and mystery.

The preceding remarks will enable us to judge of the propriety of the following statement by Dr. Russell: "Faith ought not to be considered as the condition of the new covenant. It is necessary that a man eat bread, before it can nourish him; not, however, as a condition, but because, from the very nature of the thing, bread cannot otherwise be of

service. So it is with the faith of the gospel. The whole efficacy of faith, in the matter of justification, arises from its object, in which is contained the real ground of our justification." (Letters, vol. ii., p. 84.) I cannot think otherwise of this passage, than that it is a defective one. It seems to me to contain the germ of the error which stands out in all its length and breadth in Mr. Erskine's late publication,—the error of forgetting that man needs a change of state, as well as of character; and that, though the perfect wisdom of God has been displayed in rendering the appointed instrument of justification (i. e., faith) the means also of sanctification, yet that faith is more directly and specifically connected with the former than with the latter. It does sanctify, doubtless, but that is, so to speak, an incidental and additional work; its grand business is to justify. The parallel which Dr. Russell institutes, proceeds on an overlooking, for the moment, of this important sentiment. A hungry man needs nothing but refreshment, and nourishment; but a condemned man requires more. If we suppose the case of a number of individuals both hungry and condemned, to whom a promise of pardon was made if they would consent to eat a species of provision which, notwithstanding their desire of food, was loathsome to them, though admirably adapted to recover their stomachs to a healthy tone, and finally to restore them to health, we shall have a fairer parallel than the one which Dr. Russell employs. But, in that case, the statements of this writer would not apply. Eating would stand in relation to two things—pardon and health,—and would be necessary to secure each; but it would be necessary on different grounds. To secure the latter, it would be necessary in the nature of things, but not the former. With the pardon it would stand connected as the arbitrary condition on which alone it could be enjoyed. Now man before conversion is both guilty and depraved. Faith is the means or instrument of deliverance in both points of view; but it stands in different relations to the guilt, and the depravity, or rescues from them in a different manner; *from the latter*, by the natural influence of the truth, received under Divine influence, upon the heart; *from the*

former, solely in consequence of Divine appointment, or inasmuch as it is a compliance with the revealed rule according to which the blessings which result from the death of Christ are bestowed upon men. "Believe," says God, in his rectoral character, founding, however, the rule of his government in sovereign goodness, "and thou shalt be saved." Faith, then, secures to us the blessing of justification, because it is compliance with the rule. Why, then, should it be denied that faith is the condition of the new covenant, or of justification? It may not, indeed, be expedient to adopt that phraseology, because it is liable to be misunderstood: but, if by condition of salvation, nothing more be meant than a *sine qua non* of salvation—that act of submission on the part of the sinner, without which salvation cannot be obtained—then faith is, beyond all question, the condition of salvation; or rather the condition of justification: for, if by salvation we understand admission into heaven, then, in the sense just attached to the word condition, persevering obedience, in addition to faith, is the condition. "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved." Dr. Russell, indeed, uses the words, "condition of the *new covenant*," when he denies that faith is a condition; but it is obvious, from the views he entertains of the nature of the new covenant, that he meant the same as the condition of justification. There are, indeed, some who represent the new covenant as a legal contract between the Father and the Son, the conditions of which were fulfilled by Christ; so that we have only to reap the fruits of it. Now there can be no doubt that the Son undertook to lay an honourable basis, in his obedience and death, for the extension of holy benevolence to man, and that the Father engaged that he should see his seed, and bring many sons unto glory. This, however, is not what the Scriptures mean by the new covenant; nor is there any thing of the formal and technical theology of the schools in those parts of Divine revelation in which its nature and blessings are fully unfolded. The new covenant is that edition of the gospel which it is our exalted privilege to enjoy;—that full and complete revelation of Jehovah's mercy, which announces that "God hath set forth

his Son to be a propitiatory sacrifice," and which promises that "all who believe in him, shall be justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

The preceding statements represent faith as being connected with both justification and sanctification; and as forming the instrument by which both are secured to the believer. They also partially unfold the wisdom which shines in the appointment of this medium: this is, however, a point which requires further illustration.

We have seen that the connexion of faith with justification, partakes more of an arbitrary character, than its connexion with sanctification; but even here the connexion is not entirely arbitrary. Dr. Wardlaw, in one of the most useful of his very valuable publications, says, "The connexion of eternal life with believing, arises not from any mere appointment or will that it should be so, but in a great degree, at least, from the nature of the thing. The gospel is a testimony from God. In that form it comes to us; and its demands our credence. It reveals to us certain blessings, to be enjoyed on a certain ground. How, then, is it conceivable that blessings thus revealed should be thus received and enjoyed otherwise than by the reception or belief of the testimony which reveals them? 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.' How, then, in the nature of the thing, can the life which this testimony makes known, as the gift of God through his Son, be received in any other way than by the reception of the testimony which makes it known?" Now this language, applied as it is to all the blessings of salvation, is not strictly accurate. There is no necessity, in the nature of the thing, for men to believe in order to their *having* the blessing of justification. A criminal condemned to death, might *have* the pardon, (i. e., be pardoned,) the intelligence of which was sent to him by the sovereign, without believing the intelligence, though he could not have the comfort of it. And hence the Doctor, when he proceeds afterwards more fully to unfold this general statement, very properly restricts the necessity, in the nature of the thing, to the *sense* of pardon; he does not apply it to the *state* of par-

don. Were it not for the rectoral character of God, there would be no necessity, as we have seen, (vide p. 310,) for a deed or a thought on the part of man in order to his introduction into the state of pardon; and that character obviously does not require this specific mode of introduction. Still the connexion between faith and justification is not arbitrary; for,

First, Since men are justified for the sake, or on the ground, of what has been done by the Saviour, there seems an evident propriety in making the reception of the testimony, which contains an account of that work, the medium of interest in its blessings. And,

Secondly, It is powerfully calculated to evince the gratuitous character of justification. "It is of faith," says the apostle, "that it might be by grace;" an expression which obviously implies that the appointment of any other medium of interest, would at least have apparently destroyed its gratuitous character. Is it possible to doubt this? How could an act of obedience to any precept explicitly commanded by that law from the curse of which the Saviour came to redeem us, have been constituted the means of justification, without seeming to encroach upon the freeness of justification, which the appointment of faith does not? For though, I am well aware, it may be contended, since faith itself is an act of obedience, that we are justified, i. e., instrumentally, by a work after all, there is so broad a line of distinction, in the apprehensions and feelings of men in general, between doing something that we may be treated as righteous, and believing that the work on account of which alone we can be so treated has been done by another, that the objection possesses no real force.

It is, however, in the tendency of faith to secure the sanctification of men, that the wisdom of God especially appears in this matter. The human family were condemned. An expedient was devised by which it became morally possible for the moral Governor to show mercy according to a certain rule, the establishment of which was required by his rectoral character. The human family were also depraved, as well as condemned. They were the subjects of a disease which re-

quired removal, or the pardon would have been of no avail to them. Now the wisdom of God pre-eminently appears in the determination to constitute faith the means of interest in the pardon, because it is in its own nature adapted to secure the cure, of the gospel. We are said to be "born again by the incorruptible seed of the word." "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." "Sanctify them," said our Lord, "through thy truth; thy word is truth." Thus the blessings of justification and sanctification are, in Christian experience, inseparably united; and he whose sins are forgiven is invariably rendered "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." I find it impossible to conceive of a brighter display of wisdom than is here exhibited. Conceive of a number of prisoners on whom the sentence of death has passed, and who are at the same time sinking into the tomb through the influence of fatal disease. The sovereign offers them pardon on certain conditions. Now, it will be at once seen that the performance of these conditions, were the persons able and willing to perform them, would not remove the malady under which they labour. Another process would be necessary to effect this. It is not thus, however, in reference to man as a criminal before God. The very same act which is required of him, by the moral Governor, in order to his enjoyment of the pardon he needs, is also the means of his obtaining the cure he needs! The belief of the glad tidings, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself," reconciles his heart to God, and thus prepares him for the full fruition of his presence in the world above.

There can be little doubt that the serious error into which Mr. Erskine has fallen, in his book on Universal Pardon, results from pushing this sentiment too far. The germs of it exist in one of his former works, where he represents the pardon of the gospel as subordinate to the cure. God does not, he says, cure that he may pardon, but pardons that he may cure. In the publication referred to above, he seems to represent the death of Christ as necessary, not so much to render the exercise of forgiveness consistent with the claims of truth, and justice, and holiness, but to afford a display of

love so overpowering as to win back the alienated hearts of sinners to God, that is, to cure their moral disease. Now, there does not appear to me to be more than a step or two between this and Unitarianism. It overlooks, with that system, the relation which God sustains to man as his moral Governor; and where that is lost sight of, one of the most effectual barriers against that system is removed. The direct object aimed at and accomplished in the mission, and suffering, and death of Christ, was to open a way for the honourable exercise of mercy. The glad tidings of what the Saviour has done are announced to men, that they may enjoy the benefits which result from his work—may be restored to the favour and image of God by the belief of the tidings. But I see no propriety whatever in representing the pardon as subordinate to the cure, or the cure to the pardon.

There is only one other point to which the reader's attention must be directed before we take our final leave of the subject of justification. It may, perhaps, be best to introduce it in the form of an objection against the great doctrine which the preceding Lectures have aimed to support, viz., that "we are justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." The objection is derived from the well-known language of James, "Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (Chap. ii. ver. 24.) Luther, we are told, could not reconcile the two apostles to his own full satisfaction. To preserve, therefore, the important doctrine of justification by faith without works, he was for rejecting the epistle of James as spurious. Others, who adhered to the doctrine of Paul, have resorted to very unsatisfactory modes of explaining the language of James, so as to preserve that harmony between his statements, and those of his brother apostle, which must exist among persons who wrote as they were moved by the Spirit of God.

Many imagine that, when James says of Abraham, that he was justified by works, afterwards extending the same statement to men in general, he meant only to intimate that by our good works we make it manifest to ourselves that we are in a justified state. "Now I readily grant," says an excellent

writer; "that good works are an evidence to ourselves, that we are in a state of favour with God, but surely it cannot be said that Abraham had no evidence of this till he offered up his son. Besides, to have evidence in our works that we are justified, is not to be justified by works. The evidence of a thing cannot be the thing itself; nor does justification here signify a man's approbation of himself, but the favourable verdict of another concerning him; for 'not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.'"

Others suppose that Paul treats of justification in the sight of God, since he uses the expression, "*in his sight*:" but that James speaks of it as it appears before *men*, because he says, "I will show thee my faith by my works." "Now we readily admit that a man's faith is rendered manifest by his works, and that it is our duty thus to let our light shine before men, that they may glorify our Father who is in heaven. But surely James, by being justified, meant more than this. And can we suppose that Paul, who esteemed it so light a thing to be justified or condemned by man, intended to state that it was only thus [that Abraham's faith wrought with his works, or that he was justified? James introduces what he says of justification by works with this exhortation, "So speak ye, and so judge, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty;" in which words he certainly refers to the law of God. We cannot, therefore, reasonably suppose that he has only the judgment of men in view; for that is always fallible, frequently erroneous, and at best but of small consequence."

Others, again, imagine that Paul means the justification of our persons, and James the justification of our faith. I agree with an excellent writer, "that there is not much meaning in this. Our faith is, indeed, shown by our works, but in no other way than we ourselves are shown to be believing persons. No man's faith can be justified abstractedly from his person." Besides, the apostle does not say that by works *faith* is justified, but a *man* is justified. To maintain that he means the former, is to charge him with uttering nonsense; for what meaning is there in the assertion, "By works faith is justified, and not by faith only?"

Dr. Dwight tells us that James is speaking of "mere speculative faith, and Paul, of that confidence in God from which all works of righteousness certainly and necessarily flow;" and this is perhaps the general opinion. It is, however, most manifestly an erroneous one; for conceding to Dwight, for the sake of argument, that there is a right and a wrong way of believing the gospel, and that justification is not of course connected with the wrong faith; he surely will not venture to contend, in the face of Paul's assertion, that we are justified by faith alone, without the deeds of the law,—that it is not connected with the right faith,—that there must be both the right faith, and its fruits, i. e., good works, in order to justification. Now Abraham's faith was the right kind of faith, for it produced works; and James tells us that he was justified by works, proceeding to affirm the general doctrine that men are justified by works, and not by faith alone. Dwight makes a very feeble effort to show that these words may be reconciled with his doctrine. In my apprehension they are altogether fatal to it. Some persons, resorting to a subterfuge, tell us that James did not mean, that we are not justified by faith alone, but by a faith which is alone. I venture to call this a subterfuge, a very dishonourable one as it appears to me, because we can only judge of what the apostle James meant, by what he says; and he says that we are not justified by faith alone, but by faith in connexion with works.

It is not possible, therefore, to reconcile the statements of the two apostles, but by supposing that the term "justification" is used by them in a different sense. This may accordingly be regarded as the true reconciling principle. "By justification," says Mr. Fuller, "Paul meant the acceptance of a sinner before God; but James refers to his being approved of God as a true Christian." "The meaning of James," says the late M'Lean, of Edinburgh, "is, that believers in Christ, abounding in the work of faith and labour of love, are approved of the Lord as his faithful servants, and shall at last be openly acknowledged and rewarded by him as such; not according to the tenor of the law of works, but according to the constitution of grace established in the blood and mediation of

Christ." "The true solution of the difficulty," adds Dr. Wardlaw, "appears to be, that the subjects of which the inspired writers respectively treat, *are not the same*. They are reasoning against different descriptions of persons, and are speaking of different justifications. Paul's argument is with those who, in whole or in part,—either without the faith of the gospel, or in combination with it,—sought, and taught others to seek, justification by the works of the law. The argument of James is with another class of persons altogether,—even those who professed to seek justification by faith alone, but whose professed faith was unproductive of good works. Agreeably to this difference of subjects, and of objects, the two writers, I have observed, speak of different justifications. The one treats of the justification before God of a sinner considered as condemned by the law;—the other treats of the justification of a believer in Christ, considered in that capacity. Now the former of these justifications is by faith,—the latter by works. Both are equally necessary, both mutually consistent. The affirmation of James in the text, I understand to be, not that the same justification is both by works, and by faith,—but that there is a justification by works, as well as a justification by faith,—and that where there is not the former, there is not, and cannot be, the latter,—no man being justified by faith as a sinner, who is not also justified by works as a professed believer." (Sermons, pp. 118, 119.)

LECTURE XX.

REGENERATION.

THE term Regeneration designates the second of the two comprehensive blessings which include in themselves, or their consequences, all that the Saviour bestows upon his people in this world, as a necessary preparation for the glories of the world to come. The exalted privilege, to which the attention of the reader has been already called, removes, as we have seen, the *legal* barrier against our admission into heaven; that, on the consideration of which we are about to enter, the *moral* barrier. Justification is a change of state; Regeneration a change of character. The former confers upon us a title to heaven; the latter a holy meetness for it: and thus, when bestowed in union, as is invariably the case, they meet and supply the wants of man as a being who has lost both the favour and the image of his Maker. The blessing itself is set before us in such passages as the following. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James i. 18.) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23.) These passages exhibit manifestly an important change of character, and give rise to the following inquiries: "What is the nature of the change? How is it effected? Why must it be experienced?" Or, in other words, what is the nature, the cause, and the necessity of regeneration? Under these three inquiries it will be possible to include all that it is thought desirable to say upon the subject.

I. Our first inquiry relates, then, to the nature of regeneration. Now it might appear, a first view, expedient, if not

absolutely necessary, to clear the way for our subsequent statements, by a preparatory description of certain changes which do not amount to what is intended by the term regeneration; for it often happens that men deceive themselves on this important subject, and rest satisfied with some partial change which does not more truly constitute the new birth, than the shadow identifies itself with the substance. Suppose the case of a man who has diminished his fortune, and shattered his constitution, by sensual indulgences. He sees that his last shilling will soon be spent, and that life will be very speedily extinguished, if he continue in his present course. He is wise enough to listen to the voice of reason, and to desist. But he does not cease to love the criminal pleasures in which he had indulged. It is, on the contrary, a source of perpetual annoyance and mortification to him, that he cannot give the reins to his corrupt propensities as he had been wont to do. Are we to consider such a man a new creature? Surely not. It is the mind that constitutes the man, so that while the identity of the mind remains, it would not be much more absurd, because an individual had altered his dress, to call him a new creature, than so to designate him, because he had made clean the exterior of his character, or rather its dress, while the interior remained as filthy and abominable as ever. I do not, therefore, think it an unimportant matter to show what regeneration is *not*; but the most effectual way of accomplishing this, will, I apprehend, be to state what regeneration *is*: and, as we proceed in describing its nature, to show that those exterior and partial changes which sometimes take place *in* an individual, or rather *upon* him, do by no means amount to that entire renovation of all the principles and faculties of the soul, to which the name of regeneration, or new birth, is attached by the inspired writers, and which must be experienced by all men, ere they can obtain admission into the kingdom of God.

Before we proceed to a more formal consideration of the nature of regeneration, it appears to me desirable to call the attention of the reader to one or two preliminary remarks: the first regards the extent of the change denoted by the

word; the second, its nature. First, then, let it be observed, that the general descriptions of regeneration contained in the inspired volume imply, that the change of character denoted by the term is an entire or a radical one. It is evidently not some minute or uncircumstantial alteration which will justify us in designating any man a new creature; but a total revolution of character. There must exist, in the entire renovation of the heart, an adequate foundation for the use of metaphors so bold and strong; or it would be difficult to defend the sacred writings against the charge of pompous trifling.

Secondly, that the change of which we now speak is entirely of a moral nature. It is, indeed, characterized as a creation; and the term seems necessarily to imply the production of something which did not exist before, and by an agency direct or immediate,—like that which brought the chaotic materials, out of which so much order and beauty were at length educed, into existence. We must, however, guard most especially against supposing that it is the production of new natural or physical powers. The defect under which natural men lie, is a moral defect—and a moral defect exclusively. Adam did not cease to be a perfect man, physically considered, when he became a sinner. He lost no physical power or susceptibility which distinguishes the nature of man, in this point of view, from that of beasts; but he lost that sacred principle of love to God, which had regulated the exercise of all his physical powers, and led him to consecrate the whole of them to the Divine glory. He did not lose his intellect, will, or affections; but he lost his disposition to employ these powers in the service of his Maker. It is of great importance to bear these statements in mind, because, there are individuals (the Arminian scheme, as expounded by Mr. Watson, does this) who give a representation of the doctrine of the fall which completely overthrows the criminality and accountability of man. Some have maintained that he lost his free agency,—a statement not less absurd to those who reflect upon its meaning, than would be the assertion that he lost his understanding; and that the moral government of God is now exercised over a world of idiots. Man lost, by the fall, the

holy guide, so to speak, of his mind. He lost his disposition—not his physical power—to fulfil the great ends of his being; and, consequently, there is in every unconverted man an irregular and depraved development, and exercise, of all the faculties of the mind. The understanding calls good evil, and evil good; it puts darkness for light, and light for darkness. The affections cleave to those objects which are adorned by the understanding with such alluring, though false attractions; the desires go out after them as the ultimate and supreme good; and the will is set upon doing evil. Now regeneration is not *the act of delivering* from this depraved state, and exercise of the various powers of the mind, as some mistakingly suppose,—keeping their contemplations too much fixed upon the agency which delivers them,—but it is the *deliverance itself*. It is the giving of light to the understanding—of rectitude to the will—of purity to the affections; in short, it is the transformation of its happy subject into the holy image of God. And because there is spiritual knowledge, and holy love, in the mind of a Christian, which were not to be found in that mind previously to conversion, the change of which we speak is called, as we have seen, a creation.

Having made these introductory and explanatory remarks, I now pass on to a more formal statement of the nature of regeneration, of which I am disposed to give the following definition. Regeneration denotes that entire moral change which is effected upon men by the instrumentality of the gospel of Christ. It comprehends the spiritual illumination of the understanding, the sanctification of the affections, the renewal of the will, and the purification of the conduct. In short, it is the commencement of that spiritual cure, which will be perfected when “mortality shall have been swallowed up of life.”

This definition overlooks a distinction, frequently made by theological writers, between regeneration and conversion; the former term denoting, as they imagine, that Divine influence by which the change is effected,—or rather *that direct or proximate effect* of this influence upon the mind, which is supposed to be prior, in the order of nature, to all spiritual per-

ceptions, and feelings, and, partially at least, the cause of them: the latter term denoting that actual and active turning of the soul to God, which is the more ultimate though certain result of the Spirit's influence. According to this distinction, the soul in regeneration is passive, "being the subject," says one, "on which, or in which, the effect is produced; but in conversion it is active; it takes new views of God; exercises different, i. e., spiritual, affections towards him," &c.

Now, without meaning to deny the general correctness of the preceding representation of what really takes place in the mind of a sinner when he is converted to God, I do not intend to adopt this distinction in my subsequent statements, for the following reasons.

In the first place, I do not think that I should be able to give a distinct and intelligible account of the nature of regeneration in this restricted sense of the term. I have no doubt, indeed, that the primary operation of the Spirit of God upon the mind is a *direct* operation, i. e., not through the medium or instrumentality of Divine truth. And I am further thoroughly persuaded that it must leave some permanent effect upon the mind,—some change in its moral state, predisposing it to receive, and love, and obey the truth. But I am quite free to acknowledge that I do not feel able to describe the precise nature of that change, or even to form any distinct conceptions of its nature. I have a strong conviction that most of the writers, in modern times at least, who have attempted to explain its nature, have employed very inappropriate and unfortunate phraseology. They have used terms, as they appear to me at least, not fitted to describe the effect upon the mind of *the primary and direct influence of the Spirit*, but that which results from *the influence of the truth upon the mind*, when its meaning, and evidence, and glory, have been unveiled to the view of an individual by the Holy Spirit. Few things can be more apparent than that actual love to God, for instance, is the result of that knowledge of his character which is derived from the gospel,—that it cannot exist without such knowledge,—and must necessarily be subsequent to it. Yet some incautious writers have employed language which would

seem to indicate the opinion that love to God is actually kindled in the mind by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit; and that spiritual or just views of the Divine character are subsequent to the existence of love, and flow from it as their cause. And what are we to understand by the statements of other writers, that a holy principle, or a bias to that which is good, is implanted by the direct influence of the Spirit in regeneration? I am persuaded that, in the only definite sense which can be attached to these expressions, they convey more than the case warrants;—they describe, in short, the effect of the combined influence of the truth and the Spirit; instead of exhibiting exclusively, as they should have done, the result of the latter influence. In fact, in the controversy which has been carried on between those who maintain that in regeneration there is a direct influence of the Spirit of God upon the mind, and those who deny this—affirming that the influence is mediate, or instrumental, i.e., exerted by the means of Divine truth,—the great difficulty, in the case of those who hold the first of these opinions, is to describe accurately and intelligibly, not the nature and manner of Divine influence, but the proximate *result* of that influence,—the precise nature of that *effect* upon the mind which predisposes it to entertain just apprehensions of Divine things, and to cherish suitable affections towards them. The conscious impossibility of doing this, held me to the latter opinion for many years. Of the nature of that effect upon the mind, or of that change in its moral state (the direct and proximate result of the regenerating energy) which is in the order of nature previous to spiritual perceptions and feelings, and, partially at least, the cause of them, I could form no distinct conceptions *then*, and I am constrained to avow that I have made no further progress *now*. I am, however, satisfied at length to let this point remain in that state of comparative darkness from which I have never witnessed a successful attempt to rescue it, and am myself unable to make one. I believe that some change is produced in the moral state of the mind, by the direct influence of the Spirit of God, leading to spiritual perceptions and affections, and being, of course, in

the order of nature previous to them; but I pretend not to be able to describe its formal nature. But,

Secondly, The change to which I have just referred is rather something previous to regeneration, than regeneration itself. Whatever be the nature of the change denoted by that word, it results, beyond all question, from the influence of Divine truth. "Of his own will begat he us," says James, "with the word of truth." "Being born again," adds Peter, "not of corruptible seed, &c., but by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

I confess I have always been dissatisfied with the way in which Mr. Fuller, Dr. Williams, and others, have attempted to reconcile these passages with the sentiments they hold on this subject. James and Peter refer, say they, to regeneration, *improperly so called*. The proper sense of the term is exhibited in those passages which describe the effect of the *direct* agency of the Spirit upon the mind. Now, in the first place, I apprehend many of the passages to which they refer, do not exhibit exclusively the effect of this direct agency of the Spirit, but the results of the combined influence of the Spirit and the truth; such as, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; renew a right spirit within me." And, in the second place, I think I may venture to affirm, that not one of those passages to which they appeal as exhibiting the effect of the direct influence of the Spirit, although none of them should be excepted against, declares that effect to be regeneration. Mr. Fuller is, therefore, involved in the curious predicament of affirming a certain effect or change to be regeneration, in the proper sense of the term, which is never said to be such; and of denying that a certain other change *is*, strictly speaking, regeneration, though it only is designated by that name in the word of God. We cannot well be wrong in following the apostles James and Peter—in calling that regeneration, which is so denominated by them. I believe in the direct influence of the Spirit of God upon the mind, and that it produces a radical change in the moral state of the mind. I further believe that this change is necessary to rege-

neration. But it is a precursor; it is not the thing itself. Regeneration is the whole of that change which is effected upon men by the instrumentality of the gospel. This definition ascribes the change to the gospel proximately, but it only ascribes it to the gospel instrumentally. It presents the Holy Spirit before us as the great Agent, inasmuch as he operates *directly* in opening the eyes of the understanding to perceive and believe Divine truth; and, *indirectly*, in rectifying the views, and sanctifying the affections of men by the truth,—the instrument employed by him to accomplish his ultimate purposes.

In describing more particularly that change which we denominate regeneration, we must look at it in detail, and present it in parts, so to speak; I observe accordingly,

1st, That the gospel illuminates the understanding, so that a just and believing apprehension of the things of the Spirit of God, constitutes one branch of regeneration, or one feature of the new creature. "The natural man," we are told, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them;" i. e., he has not a just apprehension of their nature; they do not appear to him supremely excellent, important, and glorious. Hence men, in a state of nature, are denominated "children of darkness." Such is the state in which the gospel finds all men; but it does not leave them in it. It brings them out of darkness into marvellous light. It renders them children of light and of the day, by imparting correct conceptions of Divine things in general,—of the state of man by nature,—the extent and spirituality of the Divine law,—the evil of sin,—the character, perfections, and government of God,—the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, and of the infinite value of those blessings which flow to the world through his mediation. The conceptions of the regenerate man, in reference to these subjects, are, we say, correct; they must be so, because they are derived from the gospel. They are, so to speak, the faithful delineations of the inspired writers, or rather of the Spirit of God, who assumed the guidance of their pens, transferred to their minds. And since the excellence and glory of the things of God are ex-

hibited in the gospel, there must be an apprehension of that excellence and glory in their minds. The great facts of the gospel, in their implication, and bearing, and importance, must be understood; and the infinitely important subjects concerning which revelation treats, must appear to them in an aspect similar to that which they assume to the holy intellect of God himself. How otherwise could their conceptions of Divine truth be correct? This perception of the excellence and glory of the things of the Spirit of God, constitutes mainly, if not exclusively, that illumination of the understanding in which regeneration partly consists. It is possible for an unconverted man to attain to a correct knowledge of the theory of the gospel, to be able to give an accurate account of the doctrine of Scripture in reference to the Divine character,—the condition of man as a sinner against God, and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. He may assent to the great facts of the gospel. He may even believe them, as we have formerly stated, in the sense which he attaches to them; but he does not see them in their moral importance and glory. He understands that God is holy and just, as well as good; but he perceives nothing attractive in this view of the Divine character. He understands that mankind can only be saved by faith in Christ, but there is, in his apprehension, nothing glorious in this plan of salvation. He is like a man destitute of taste for the beauties of nature. The same objects meet his view by which others are enraptured and entranced; but they present not the same appearance to him, as to them, and hence produce no effect upon him. On the contrary, an individual into whose heart God hath shined, has had a full discovery of the depravity of his nature; he has an impressive view of the awful evil of sin; he perceives a glory surrounding the character of Jehovah, of which he had formerly no conception; and he is free and loud in his acknowledgments, that so vast and unbounded was the expenditure of wisdom, and of love, in the plan of salvation through the Redeemer, that eternity itself will not be more than adequate to express our gratitude to him, from whose gracious heart it emanated; and by whose omnipotent arm it was accomplished.

In describing, in detail, the nature of that moral change which is effected upon man by the gospel of Christ, we proceed to observe,

2nd, That the gospel purifies the affections, as well as enlightens the understanding, so that love to whatever is morally excellent, constitutes another branch of regeneration.

Such is the nature of our mental constitution that we cannot love what does not appear excellent, nor fail to love that which does so appear. It is necessary to express ourselves guardedly here; because, though an object should possess unrivalled attractions, if we do not see them, or if they do not appear attractions to us, we do not love it. And, on the contrary, though an object should possess no intrinsic value whatever,—though it should even be utterly unworthy of the esteem of a rational and an immortal creature, yet if our imaginations array it in charms which do not belong to it, we invariably regard it with love. In consequence of the entire perversion of his moral taste, degraded pleasures appear excellent to the sinner; holiness, on the contrary, unattractive and repulsive. He accordingly loves the former, and hates the latter. But when God, by the power of his Spirit, removes the veil from his heart,—when he gives him a discovery of the excellence, importance, and glory of the things of the Spirit of God; when he leads him, by an influence which we cannot explain, to take that view of their nature and superlative value, which is presented in his blessed word,—then will the affections of this individual flow to them as naturally, and necessarily, as they receded from them before. The purification of the affections, then, not only cannot take place without the illumination of the understanding, which is perfectly self-evident to those who know any thing of the constitution of the human mind, but it must necessarily result from that illumination. No sooner is an individual brought to see the extent and spirituality of the Divine law, and to feel that he stands before it in the character of a transgressor, than he prostrates himself in the dust of abasement before Jehovah. No sooner is he made *to discover* the infinite evil of sin, than he begins to hate it with a perfect hatred; *to behold* the glory

of the Divine character, than he begins to love it with all his heart; *to perceive* the perfection of the plan of mercy through a Redeemer, than he begins to rejoice in it as all his salvation and all his desire. At the very instant in which the matchless glories of the Saviour, as they are exhibited with full-orbed splendour in the volume of Divine truth, burst upon his view, he gives his undivided affections to him, and feels that if he had ten thousand lives they should all be devoted to him. It is unnecessary to enlarge, by adducing other particulars. In this manner the gospel purifies the affections of men; it inspires them with love to all things which are spiritually excellent, and with hatred to all kinds and degrees of moral pollution; with love to God,—to his Son Jesus Christ,—to all who bear his image, and are adopted into his family; for whoso loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him;—with love to the word of God—the worship of God—the ways of God. It detaches their affections, in short, from every thing that is base, ignoble, carnal, and temporal; and raises them to “the things which are above, where Jesus sitteth on the right hand of God.”

3rd, The gospel of Christ subdues the natural stubbornness of the will, so that a ready and an habitual subjection of mind to the Divine will constitutes another branch of regeneration. “Father,” said our blessed Lord, “if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.” Such is the temper of mind which the gospel is adapted to produce; for it was designed to conform us in all things to our exalted Head: and such is the temper which every being must possess, before his pretension to moral excellence can be recognised as valid. It constituted the temper which was actually displayed by man in his primeval state. He had then no will but that of his Maker. But since the fall, he has manifested a refractory state of mind. He has been disposed to murmur at the allotments of Jehovah, and to rebel against his sovereign authority. The words of Pharaoh to Moses, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?” express the genuine feelings of nature: for, in fact, all the moral evil that is abroad upon the face of the

earth, may be traced to the rebellious and impious determination of the creature, to act according to his own inclinations; or to yield obedience to the will of God, no farther than as it may suit his convenience, or his desires.

Such, however, are the views which the gospel gives of the character of Jehovah—and such, of course, the views which are entertained of that character by every regenerated man;—so strong is his confidence—a confidence founded on the Divine perfections, and the Divine promises—that every event which befalls him is under the direction of unerring wisdom, and immeasurable goodness;—such is the ardour of his love to him, and such the singleness of his desire to promote the Divine glory—that, though there may be an occasional and temporary mutiny in the citadel of his heart, yet the rebel forces are soon quelled, and the habitual state of his feelings is exhibited in the words, “Father, not my will, but thine be done.” A ready and an habitual subjection to the will of God, constitutes another branch of regeneration,

4thly, The gospel operates upon the conscience as well as upon the understanding, the affections, and the will; so that an enlightened and a tender conscience constitutes another branch of regeneration. It is the province of this faculty to condemn its possessor when he acts in violation of the Divine law. Depravity, however, by its power and prevalence, has rendered it careless and torpid. It has so completely blunted its feelings and unnerved its arm, that, in the case of unregenerate men, it frequently contemplates the most flagrant crimes with little or no concern, and without inflicting upon the transgressor the chastisement which he deserves. Hence the Scriptures speak of an “evil conscience;” “a defiled conscience;” “a conscience seared as with a hot iron.” The gospel, however, is the instrument of imparting a pure, enlightened, and tender conscience. A conscience which manifests its sensibility on the slightest departure from the known path of duty; and which never fails, by its solemn rebuke, to render sin its own punishment. This, indeed, is the great promise of the new covenant. “A new heart,” said God, “will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and

I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." I cannot refrain from laying before the reader, the beautiful illustration of Mr. Jay; "Take a stone—feel it, how cold—strike it, it resists the blow—lay upon it a burden, it feels no pressure—apply a seal, it receives no impression! Such were our hearts once—thus cold, senseless, unyielding, impenetrable, and unsusceptible." But God takes away the heart of stone, and gives a heart of flesh. An enlightened and a tender conscience thus constitutes one branch of regeneration.

5thly, The gospel imparts new joys and sorrows, new hopes and fears, new pursuits and prospects, and these are all characterized by holiness. Hence holy joys and sorrows, holy expectations and fears, holy pursuits and prospects, constitute another branch of regeneration. Previous to conversion, our joys and sorrows are awakened by temporal objects at all events, if not by sinful ones. We never joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ; never rejoice in the light of his countenance; never mourn over the existence of depravity in our hearts, or on account of our very imperfect conformity to the holy image of God. Such, however, are the mental exercises of all who have been "born again by the incorruptible seed of the word." Previous to conversion we never longed for heaven, because it is the abode of holiness, and, though we might dread punishment, we never feared sin. But, if we have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus, it is the holiness of the world above that constitutes, in our estimation, one of the main attractions of the place; and, though sin were not to be followed by death, it would still be the object of our unmingled abhorrence. Previous to our conversion, we "walked after the course of this world," indulging the vices of the mind,—self-righteousness, pride, vain-glory,—if our conduct were not marked by fraud, impiety, profanity, intemperance, or unbridled sensuality; nor had we then a well-founded hope that, at the termination of our course on earth, we should enjoy an "abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But, if we have been made "new creatures in Christ Jesus," we consider our-

selves not "debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh;" "we reckon ourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." We feel and acknowledge that "sin should not reign in our mortal body;" "that we should be no longer the slaves of sin, but the servants of God; having our fruit unto holiness, and the end thereof everlasting life."

Such is a brief description of regeneration. We may conclude, from the foregoing statement, that it is scarcely correct to say, as some have done, that regeneration is the effect of faith; for faith itself, resulting as it does from the truth, may in one sense be regarded as a branch of regeneration; and, perhaps, it ought to be so represented. The evidence that the gospel is the truth of God, *is in the gospel itself*. When the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the mind, we, accordingly, at once perceive it; so that the belief of the truth is as much to be ascribed instrumentally to the truth itself, as the love of the truth. The perceived evidence of the truth produces faith; its perceived excellence, awakens love. And, whether faith be the *effect* of regeneration, or not, depends entirely upon the definition we give of regeneration. If Mr. Fuller's sense of the term were the correct one, it would doubtless be so. If the definition given in the preceding pages be the correct and scriptural one, it is even more absurd to call faith the effect of regeneration, than to maintain the converse, viz., that regeneration is the effect of faith. I greatly prefer that statement of both, which represents them as resulting from the influence of Divine truth.

I might here close my account of the nature of regeneration, but as the subject is one of vast importance, and as there are those, on the one hand, who are harassed with unnecessary doubts whether they have undergone the change,—and many, on the other hand, who satisfy themselves, in consequence of some trifling alarm on account of sin, that they have experienced it, and so are going "down to hell with a lie in their right hand," it may not be useless to point out a few of the evidences of the change, as a farther exposition of its nature, in the form of a number of questions which the reader may put to his conscience in the solitude of the closet, while he is earnestly

implored to do this, and to connect, with the process of self-examination, most fervent prayers for Divine illumination.

First, then, "Have I been brought to see that eternal concerns are infinitely important? One of the characteristic marks of those "who are in the flesh," is great or total carelessness about eternity.—Is this the present frame of my mind? Or am I giving to the realities of the world to come my paramount attention? Have I been brought to feel that, as there is infinite misery to be avoided, and infinite good to be secured hereafter, the pursuit of pleasures—which can exist but for a moment, and the avoidance of evils—which at most can only continue for a season, and perhaps a very short one, should be made to give entire place to the desire of escaping hell, and rising to heaven? And *have* they given place to this desire? Have I been brought to feel that even the *lawful* gratifications of the present state, are so worthless when compared with the blessings which eternity presents to our view, that they ought to be sacrificed without a moment's hesitation, should the sacrifice be necessary to secure the latter? And that its *unlawful* gratifications ought not to be tasted, or even thought of? Have I, in short, been brought to feel that the soul is an object of such transcendent importance, that it should attract our supreme, and habitual, and exclusive attention, to itself? And does it do this? If this be not the case with me, I am declared, by the Scriptures, to be "in the flesh, and cannot of course please God."

Secondly, "Have I been brought to entertain just apprehensions of the things of the Spirit of God? What are my conceptions of the Divine being? Do I regard him habitually, as the ever-present Deity—abroad, around, within me; as privy to every deed I perform; every word I speak; every thought which arises in the secret recesses of my bosom? Do I contemplate him as a being whose nature is infinitely averse to all kinds, and degrees, of moral pollution? Do I believe that justice, and holiness, and truth, are essential perfections of his character, and that he can no more act in opposition to these attributes than he can cease to exist? And does this view of his character appear glorious to *me*? What, again, are the

conceptions I form in regard to the law of God? Do I consider it improperly strict, if not unjust, in requiring absolute perfection, and in pronouncing the sentence of condemnation against those who are the subjects of a single unhallowed desire? Or, am I ready to acknowledge that the law of God is exactly what it *should* be? that it *ought* to extend to the thoughts and intents of the heart? That the evil of sin is so tremendously, so infinitely great, that the justice of God absolutely requires that the least violation of its precepts *should* expose the transgressor to everlasting destruction? What, again, are my views of myself? Do I fancy that I am rich, and increased in goods? Or, if disposed to admit that there is some defect in my moral constitution, am I reluctant to believe that it has become totally deranged? Do I hesitate to receive the testimony of God concerning the heart of man by nature, that it is evil, only evil, and that continually? Or, do I unfeignedly believe that "the carnal mind is enmity against God"—that the whole of the human family are by nature earthly, sensual, and devilish? What, further, are my views of the way of salvation? Do I indulge the hope of being able to atone for my own sins?—or, do I see that the free and sovereign grace of God must be the source of all my hopes of mercy?—that transgression has occasioned so wide, and vast, and apparently so incurable a breach between man and his Maker, that even the goodness of God, unbounded and infinite as it is, can find no honourable channel through which it may flow to men, but the bitter agonies and death of his Son? And am I actually building upon this atonement as the exclusive ground of a sinner's confidence before God?

Thirdly, "Have the *views* I have been brought to entertain of the things of the Spirit of God, had the effect of drawing out my *affections* towards them, with a supreme degree of attachment? Have I been made to love all things that bear a character of moral excellence, and on account of the moral excellence by which they are adorned? What is the state of my heart towards God? Is he the object of my habitual thoughts, and of my supreme regard? Do I constantly meditate upon his character, perfections, and government? Do I

love to contemplate his works, especially his work of works, the work of redemption, tracing it from the moment when the first promise of salvation beamed upon man, till the period of its full accomplishment, as the Saviour hung upon the cross? And then, borne forwards by faith and hope, do I anticipate the arrival of the time when all its blessings will be unveiled unto my view in the mansions above? With regard to God, can I adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven, but thee?" &c. Is He the sweet resting-place—the home of my affections, to whom, though they should wander for a season, they invariably return, while the language of my soul is, Here will I stay, and this shall be my rest for ever? What, again, is the state of my heart towards the Lord Jesus Christ? Is he, in my estimation, "fairer than the children of men," "the chiefest among ten thousand," "yea, the altogether lovely?" Do I conceive of every blessing as the effect of his mediation, and while partaking of the gifts, does my soul rise in adoring gratitude to him through whose gracious hands they have been communicated? What, further, is the state of my heart towards that "one family of which God is the Father, and Jesus Christ the elder brother?" Do I love its members "with a pure heart fervently?" Do I love them because they bear the image of Christ, and do I love them "not in word only, but in deed and truth?" What is the state of my heart towards the word of God? Is it more precious to me than gold of Ophir? Can I say, with David, "O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day?" Do I love it for the discoveries it gives of the Divine character and law, of the plan of mercy through Jesus Christ, and of the boundless and everlasting blessings which flow to the world in consequence of his mission, and death? And, consequently, is my habitual perusal of it not regarded as a task, but engaged in with feelings more allied to those of the miser when surveying his secret hoard of gold, or of the half-starved wretch who is sent to a plentiful table? What, finally, is the state of my heart in reference to the worship, and ordinances of God? Can I say, with the Psalmist, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell

in the house of the Lord for ever?" "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord God of Hosts, my soul longeth for thy courts."

Fourthly, "Has my will been brought into a state of habitual subjection to the Divine will? Do I fret, and murmur, at the allotments of Divine Providence concerning me, saying, 'Why were not wealth, and honour, and affluence, and splendour, given to me, as well as to others, who certainly deserve them no better?' Or, have I so deep a consciousness of my own unworthiness of the least of all God's mercies, and so perfect a conviction of his unerring wisdom, and unspeakable goodness, that I am sensible I ought to be content; and that it is my earnest desire, and habitually successful endeavour, 'in whatever state I am, therewith to be content?' Do I habitually rebel against God, when he lays his hand upon me—stretches me upon the bed of affliction—touches me in some tender point—withers some shade-giving gourd? Ah! these are the seasons which, like the blasts of the assayer's furnace, try the character of what sort it is. At periods like these am I like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, or do I habitually walk quietly, and resignedly, under the burden which the hand of God lays upon me?

Finally, "Am I yielding cheerful, and implicit, and habitual obedience to the commands of God? Let me not forget that any other evidence I may conceive myself to possess that I am born again, must be insufficient, if this evidence be wanting. "Show me," said the apostle James, "thy faith without thy works;" "perform," as though he had said, "the impossible task, if you can;" "and I will show thee my faith, by my works." "By their fruits," said one who is greater than James, "shall ye know them." "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

Again, then, let the reader inquire, "Is the obedience I yield to the commands of God, a cheerful obedience? Is it the obedience of the heart? Does it spring from a principle of love? Is it the offspring of those grateful, and devout affections, which render duty a delight?

“Is my obedience implicit? Is it really prompted by a regard to the authority of God, and does this appear by my practical regard to all the Divine precepts?

“Is my obedience habitual, and uniform,—not like a garment which is put on, and worn for an hour or two, and then cast aside;—does it constitute my ordinary dress? Do the principles from which it springs, govern my conduct in all the relations I sustain—in my ordinary intercourse with society—in the domestic circle, and in the world?”

While the reader is putting these questions to his own conscience, let him address God, in the language of supplication, **“Search me, O God, and know me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”**

LECTURE XXI.

REGENERATION.

THE CAUSE OF REGENERATION.

WE have considered the term regeneration as denoting the whole of that moral change which is effected upon men by the instrumentality of the gospel. This definition unfolds, at once, the nature of regeneration, and the way in which it is effected. It exhibits Divine truth, when the Holy Spirit opens the heart to receive it, as the direct and proximate source of all the views or opinions we are brought to entertain of Divine things in general, and of all the holy affections which are awakened in the mind towards them; and it further exhibits the influence of the Holy Spirit, as the direct and proximate cause of that spiritual perception of the meaning and evidence of the truth, without which it can manifestly produce no more effect upon our minds than if it had never been communicated to the world. Thus the influence both of the word and of the Spirit of God are necessary to effect the renewal of a sinner in the spirit of his mind. By some operation, which we pretend not to explain, he is brought to perceive the *true meaning*, i. e., the *spiritual meaning of Divine truth*, and the evidence on which it founds its claims to be a revelation from God. Objective truth, to use rather antiquated phraseology, becomes subjective truth. The truth in the word is transferred to the mind. It forms the opinions and sentiments of the individual; and operates in the production of that body of holy affections and desires, and hopes and fears, and joys and sorrows, which constitute unitedly the Christian character. Thus a distinction is made between the offices

of the truth, and of the Spirit, in the work of regeneration; yet the influence of both is necessary, and it may be fairly questioned whether, in the case of an adult, a single instance of conversion to God can be produced without their combined operation. Without the word, or the truth, we should be destitute of the means of renovation—there could be no love, at least rational love, to God, no *choice* of him as our portion, no self-dedication to his service; and without the influence of the Spirit, these means, even when skilfully employed, would be ineffectual; because man, left to himself, would uniformly reject the truth, and thus deprive himself of the holy influence it would exert upon his mind.

The two points, then, which I shall endeavour to establish, are the following:—

I. That the truth, or the gospel, is the means or instrument, and may, therefore, be considered the proximate cause of regeneration.

II. That it is the especial agency of the Holy Spirit which ensures the success of this means or instrument; and, therefore, the Holy Spirit must be considered the ultimate cause of regeneration.

I. We have to show that the truth, or the gospel, is the means or instrument, and may, therefore, be considered the proximate cause of regeneration. In unfolding these general statements, there are two distinct points to which the attention of the reader will be directed.

First, that the truth is the instrument of conversion, to the exclusion of every other; and, Secondly, that it is in itself perfectly adequate to the production of the important effects which are attributed to it.

First, the truth is the instrument of conversion, to the exclusion of every other. *To the exclusion of any additional communication from God*; for when the Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding, it is not by imparting a new revelation, but by enabling us to perceive the spiritual, i.e., the real meaning of the old. He takes of the things of Christ, and shows *them* to us. It is the entrance of God's word that giveth light, that giveth understanding to the simple. In like

manner, when the Holy Spirit subdues the love of sin which had formerly reigned in the bosom, and kindles within it a flame of love to God, and holiness, he does not accomplish this by imparting to us a more awful view of the evil of sin than is exhibited in the inspired volume, or, in any respect, a different view; nor by surrounding the character of God with more irresistible charms than those in which the sacred writers have arrayed it: but by leading us to take that view of both, which is presented by the Holy Scriptures. The truth is thus the exclusive instrument of regeneration. To invalidate this statement, some have referred to the case of children dying in infancy; and who, as they are the subjects of original sin, need regeneration before they can be admitted to heaven. The proper answer is, I apprehend, that, in the full sense of the term "regeneration," the sense in which it is used in reference to an adult, comprehending the whole of that moral change which has been described, infants do not need, and are, indeed, incapable of, regeneration. In infants there are no mistaken apprehensions of Divine things to be corrected; no actual unholy affections towards them to be subdued, and removed: for, in the mind of an infant, there are, in reference to these things, *no* apprehensions and *no* affections of any description. There exists, doubtless, in the mind of every infant, the germ of that unholy fruit which, unless the grace of God prevent, will become at length visible; but the fruit itself has not as yet made its appearance. As far as they need regeneration, they are regenerated; i. e., an influence is exerted upon them, by the Spirit of all grace, which will ensure a holy exercise of the powers of their minds, when they become capable of moral perceptions and affections. Some change is produced upon them, of what nature I do not pretend to say, leading certainly to their subsequent devotion to God; but this, so far from being effected by an instrument different from the truth, is not effected by means at all; but by the direct agency of the Spirit of God. And if any one should reply, that, as this is not regeneration in the sense in which I have used the term, infants may be admitted to heaven without regeneration; I would reply, without being very care-

ful to defend the accuracy of the phraseology, that they are regenerated in the same sense in which they are depraved;—the germ of sin is removed,—the germ of holiness is introduced,—the only change that can be effected by any power upon the mind of an infant.

Others, again, refer to certain individuals in heathen lands, who, though they never heard the gospel, have given, as it is alleged, hopeful evidence of conversion to God. In reply, I would observe, in the First place, that it may possibly be doubted whether the alleged facts are sufficiently substantiated; or, Secondly, admitting that they are so, that they do not contradict the assertion that no instrumentality, save that of the gospel, is employed in the regeneration of men. For, in the instances referred to, where the hearts of individuals, in regions which have not been visited with the light of Divine truth, are savingly turned to God, if such instances there be, it may prove to be the case that some supernatural revelation of the gospel was made to their minds, so that the instrument of personal renovation is the same—it is still the gospel; the only difference is in the mode in which the knowledge of the gospel was obtained. This is the best opinion I can form on the subject; it is, however, only an opinion. It seems to me impossible to conceive of renovated affections, in the full sense of the expression, as the result of an immediate and direct influence of the Spirit of God. While our physical constitution remains what it is, a spiritual perception of the Divine character must surely exist, in the order of nature at least, previously to the exercise of love to it. Were I to admit, then, that this perception may be the result of direct influence, somewhat in the same way with the inspiration of the ancient prophets, though I am aware there is difficulty even in this supposition, it would still remain a truth that the hearts of the persons, in the circumstances supposed, are affected through the medium of the understanding, as is the case with us. I can easily suppose, indeed, that there may be persons, amongst the heathen, who have undergone that change which I imagine is in all cases experienced, even in this country, as a *precursor to regeneration* in the full sense

in which I use the term; that this will be followed by their welcoming those manifestations of the Divine character which are to be seen in his works, and exercising love to that character in the degree in which the circumstances in which they are placed are adapted to develop it;—and that it would be further followed by the reception of that testimony concerning the Saviour which we enjoy, were it presented to their minds. And, if there are cases of converted heathen who have never heard the gospel—I speak thus hypothetically, for I do not feel that I have sufficient data for forming an opinion—the state of mind which I have attempted to describe is the one which is, perhaps, most likely to exist. But nothing of this gainsays the statement that, in the case of the regeneration of those who enjoy the gospel, no other instrumentality is employed.

Further, the truth is the instrument of regeneration, to the exclusion of those means which Divine Providence frequently employs to rouse men to serious reflection. It sometimes happens that the footsteps of a sinner, going on in his sins, are arrested by unlooked for and dreadful calamities. The hand of death suddenly snatches from him the companions of his guilt, or the power of God stretches him on the bed of affliction, and brings him within view of the eternal world. Conscience shakes off her slumbers, and will be heard. A spirit of penitence is awakened; and the delightful issue of the visitation is, that he “becomes a servant of God, having his fruit unto holiness, and the end thereof everlasting life.” Still it is not the affliction that turns his heart from sin to God; affliction is utterly incapable of doing this. It is by “the incorruptible seed of the word,” and not by any of the mercies or judgments of God, that sinners are born again. Divine providence is the minister of Divine grace, but it is *only* the minister. It is often employed to awaken serious reflection; to recall the neglected truths of God’s word to the recollection of the sinner; to impress them powerfully upon his conscience; and to fix his attention upon that truth which saves the soul from death and condemnation. But still it is the gospel of

God, and not the providence of God, that enlightens the eyes, and sanctifies the heart.

Secondly, we proceed to show that the truth is perfectly adequate to the production of the important effects which are attributed to it. A very few remarks will be sufficient, it is apprehended, to illustrate the truth of this assertion. Regeneration, we have seen, consists, partly at least, in the illumination of the understanding. A man who has undergone the change designated by that word, entertains just views of himself—of God—his perfections and government—of Christ—and of the way of salvation through him;—just views, in short, of Divine things in general. And is not the gospel, or the word, or the truth, for the three terms mean the same thing, adapted to communicate just apprehensions of Divine things? Is there not in the Bible a correct representation of the state of man by nature—of the law of God—and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ? Do we need any thing more, in order to the illumination of the understanding, than to receive with implicit faith the testimony of the inspired writers in reference to these things? Surely not. If the mind of any man is not enlightened by the gospel, it is not because the gospel is not able to impart light, but because his mind is shut against it. “The light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not.” Regeneration is, in short, as we have seen, a transference of the light of the word to the mind; so that every new creature is made “light in the Lord.”

Regeneration, we have further seen, partly consists in the purification of the affections. A man who has been born again, has been brought to loathe himself,—to repent in dust and ashes,—to hate sin, and to love holiness,—to meditate with delight on the law of God,—to rejoice in the Divine character, and to lean upon the Divine arm for support under the pressure of the heaviest trials. He has been brought to contemplate, with unbounded delight, the person and the work of Christ,—to rest his confidence upon his atonement,—to desire the blessings of his salvation more than his necessary food,—and to look forwards to the moment when he shall

see him as he is, as the consummation of all that he can hope, or enjoy. Now, is not the gospel, when understood and believed, adapted to effect this extraordinary moral change in the affections of all who receive it? What more is necessary to humble us before God, than to entertain that view of *our* character, and state, which is exhibited in his word? What more is necessary to kindle in our bosoms the most animated love to God, than to receive that representation of *his* character which is given us in the Scriptures of truth? What more is necessary to inspire love to the Saviour, and to lead us to build upon his atonement as the ground of hope towards God, than to possess those views of his person and work, which are presented to us in the inspired volume? Surely nothing. I do not refer, at present, let it be observed, to the agency by which we become possessed of spiritual knowledge, because that would tend, in this stage of the inquiry, to embarrass us; but I ask, whether it is possible for an individual, who understands the nature of the mind, and the laws which regulate the exercise of its power, to doubt, when we are brought to entertain those views of the things of the Spirit of God, which are presented by every page of the inspired volume, i. e., when we are brought to regard them as supremely excellent, that we shall give our supreme affections to them? Surely not. Various causes, indeed, may conspire to prevent an object appearing to us lovely which is really so; but it is impossible to prevent the going out of the affections to that which does so appear. No instrument, then, in addition to the gospel, is necessary to the purification of the heart of man.

Regeneration, it was further stated, subdues the natural stubbornness of the will,—communicates an enlightened and a tender conscience,—gives birth to new joys and sorrows, new hopes and fears, new pleasures and pursuits, all of which are characterized by holiness. Now, it is manifest that, when the gospel is understood and believed, when its testimony stands in the mind as true testimony, and the blessings which it exhibits appear supremely important and excellent—it must prove a powerful and an effectual instrument, in the hand

of the Spirit of God, of effecting this change,—of originating all the holy feelings to which we have just alluded. It is impossible to illustrate all these particulars separately;—to show *how* the gospel, when understood and believed, produces resignation to the will of God—*how* it renders the conscience sensible of the slightest deviations from the known path of duty—*how* it causes us to joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ—to mourn over the depravity which still cleaves to us—to fear sin, and to hope for heaven;—*how* it leads us to reckon ourselves to be “dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The preceding illustrations will, I trust, have rendered it unnecessary to say more, than that, when the understanding of an individual is enlightened by the Holy Spirit—in other words, when he is brought to discern the truth, and excellence, and glory, of the things of the Spirit of God, all the powers and susceptibilities of his mind must correspond, in their habitual state and exercise, with the nature of the objects which he contemplates. The holy seed, when sown in his mind, will certainly germinate, and produce corresponding fruit. Hence it is said of the gospel, that “it worketh effectually in all them that believe;” that “it is the power of God to their salvation.”

II. It is the special agency of the Holy Spirit which ensures the success of the gospel; and, therefore, the Holy Spirit may be regarded as the ultimate cause of regeneration. On this part of the subject, I propose,

1st. To establish the assertion that, in the regeneration of men, the agency of the Holy Spirit is employed; so that this Divine agent may be regarded as the ultimate cause of regeneration: and,

2nd. To offer a few general remarks, with reference to the nature of his agency, and the manner in which it is put forth.

1st. Then, we are to establish the fact that, in the regeneration of men, the agency of the Holy Spirit is employed; so that this Divine agent may be regarded as the ultimate cause of regeneration.

This assertion is supported by the express testimony of

Scripture. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God: even to them that believe on his name. Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 12, 13.) To be born of God, is to be born of the Spirit of God; for we find our Lord assuring Nicodemus, That "except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" "that," he adds, "which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John iii. 5, 6,) "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 5.) "Of his own will begat he us," says James, "with the word of truth." And these declarations are in agreement with ancient prophecy. "A new heart," says God, to his people of old, "will I give you; and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.)

The assertion is again supported by the testimony of fact. "Our Lord," says Dwight, in illustration of this point, "preached to the Jewish nation at least three years and a half; if not more than four years. It will be admitted, that he was the best of all preachers, and that his preaching was more perfectly calculated than any other to produce holiness in the hearts of those who heard him. Yet it will also be admitted, that he was not a very successful preacher. We naturally ask, why was he not successful? The apostles, on the contrary, though certainly and greatly inferior to Christ in wisdom and persuasiveness, preached still with wonderful success. St. Peter, by the first sermon he preached to the Jews, probably converted more to the faith and obedience of the gospel than Christ during the whole of his ministry. We naturally ask, whence arose this wonderfully different efficacy in the preaching of St. Peter, and that of his Master? The persons whom they both addressed were the same; they had been witnesses of the miracles of both. Why, then, were they perfectly dead to the preaching of Christ, and pricked to the heart and turned to God by that of Peter? The cause was

not in the preaching. It was not in the hearers; for they were the same persons. It was, then, an extraneous cause. It was because the Spirit was not plentifully poured out upon the world till our Lord's personal ministry was closed. The success of Peter's preaching he himself distinctly ascribes to the outpouring of the Spirit."

And to what, we may again ask, are we to ascribe the wonderfully different effects produced by the preaching of the gospel in the present day? Under the same sermon, and, therefore, by an exhibition of the same truth, while the manner of exhibiting it is also the same, one perhaps is savingly converted to God, and another remains totally unaffected. The cause being the same, how comes it to pass that there is so great a difference in the effect? How does it happen that one man is savingly benefited by the truth, and the other not? It can only be accounted for in one of two ways. Either Divine influence is exerted upon the mind of the former,—or that mind is less prejudiced naturally against the gospel than the mind of the latter, and on that account receives the gospel, while the latter repels it. The latter cannot be the case for several reasons.

Were it true, it would constitute a foundation for boasting, in opposition to one of the main designs of the gospel. A sentiment which necessarily supposes that, in a moral point of view, one man is naturally better than another,—less inveterately prejudiced against the truth,—more accessible to conviction,—more favourably disposed to admit the gospel testimony, cannot be a part of that truth, the grand intention of which is to stain the pride of man, and to exalt the glory of God. Unless we suppose that the success of the gospel is to be ascribed invariably to the influence of the Holy Spirit, it will be impossible for us to preserve entire the doctrine of salvation by grace. Should it be said, with a view to neutralize the argument here, that the candour which leads some to receive the gospel is not supposed to be the mere offspring of nature,—that it is the gift of grace; I would answer, that this amounts to the same thing with ascribing the actual reception of the gospel to Divine influence,—only that it is a more round-about and bungling way of expressing the important fact.

2nd. I am to offer a few remarks in reference to the nature of this agency, and the manner in which it is put forth. It will be possible to comprehend all that it is requisite to say on this subject under the following particulars.

First, We must be most careful not to confound the agency of the Holy Spirit, in regeneration, with the influence of the truth, as a moral means of illumination and sanctification. It is not likely that any who concur with me in the previous statements, will fall into this mistake. They will at once see how great and flagrant is the error to which I am now referring. Yet it has been committed by many. It is the error of Socinianism. Divine truth exerts a powerful influence upon the tempers and conduct of men; and, since that truth came from God, its influence upon the mind may be said to be the influence of God, or the Holy Spirit, upon the mind; just as the influence of physical causes in the material world may be said to be the influence of God. Thus will men resort to unmeaning generalities, or to doubtful analogies, borrowed from processes as mysterious as the cases they are brought forward to elucidate, rather than prostrate their understandings before the word of God. And, it is not a little curious that many of those who resort to this analogy to illustrate, or rather to explain away, Divine influence, have adopted the philosophy of Mr. Stewart—that physical causes possess no power or efficiency;—that there are, in fact, no causes, in the proper sense of the term, in the physical world at all;—that every change is effected by the direct or exclusive energy of the great First Cause. Thus they first attempt to exclude from their system, the doctrine of Divine influence, so frequently affirmed in Scripture, by pretending that it means the influence of Divine truth as the moral means of illumination and sanctification. This influence, they further tell us, may be compared to the influence of physical causes in the material world; and then, with unparalleled inconsistency, they add, that physical causes have no influence whatever! Who can deny that their logic is as false as their theology?

The error is also committed by the Sandemanians. "All the Divine power," says Mr. Sandeman, "which operates

upon the minds of men, either to give the first relief to their consciences, or to influence them in every part of their obedience to the gospel, is persuasive power; or the forcible conviction of truth." "The Spirit of God," he adds, "acts as the soul, sense, or meaning of the words wherein the gospel is delivered." Now, it is manifest that the latter statement, as far as it has any meaning, identifies the word and the Spirit; and directly opposes the important doctrine, that our first spiritual perceptions of the truth are the result of Divine influence. For, since the sense or *meaning* of the gospel testimony cannot, of course, produce any effect upon the mind, until it is *perceived*; and since the Holy Spirit acts as the *meaning* of the testimony, the perception of its meaning must be previous to his influence, and so cannot be produced *by* it. The apostle tells us that "the things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned;" but, if the Holy Spirit acts as the sense or meaning of the testimony which exhibits them, he cannot act in *giving* us this discernment. Thus Mr. Sandeman's system provides no answer to the question, "How do men come to understand and believe the gospel?" Indeed, unless I misunderstand Mr. Sandeman, he is fully aware of this; for in answer to the question, "How do men come to understand the gospel?" he represents the discovery of its meaning as being accidental, like the discovery of the "polarity of the needle, and the virtues of the jesuit's bark."

To identify the influence of the Spirit, and the influence of the truth, is, in fact, to hold the doctrine of Divine influence in name, and to deny the thing itself; while to resort to any of the material analogies to which I formerly referred with the intention, at least, of explaining the matter, is, in my apprehension, little less than absurd. That energy which the Holy Spirit exerts when a sinner is converted to God, is unlike any influence put forth in the physical world. It is of a nature entirely *sui generis*; or, if it be supposed to have any parallel at all, the parallel will be found in the primary act of creation; and not in those subsequent acts by which the motions, and changes, and all the phenomena of the material universe, are secured. But of this more will be said hereafter.

Secondly, It is a mistake, I imagine, to conceive of Divine agency, in the work of regeneration, as giving increased influence or power to the truth, and by that means securing its triumph. Many there are who admit that in regeneration, an influence is brought to bear upon the mind *distinct from*, and *additional to*, the inherent and necessary tendency of the truth to enlighten and sanctify; yet, maintaining that this influence is not exerted directly upon the mind, but indirectly, through the medium of truth, or rather upon the truth imparting to it additional moral power, they have fallen into the error, as I cannot but consider it at least, against which I am now cautioning the reader. Their mistake results, I feel strongly persuaded, from the circumstance of their having overlooked an important distinction which exists between *spiritual influence*, and *spiritual renovation*, in the full sense of the term. No one can doubt that *spiritual renovation* or the actual illumination of the understanding, and the purification of the affections, is effected, and can only be effected, by means of Divine truth. They settle down, accordingly, in this conviction, which, of course, I have no wish to shake. But they very unguardedly, as it seems to me, draw the conclusion, that *spiritual influence*, or *that Divine energy* which is partially the cause of just conceptions and holy feelings, is also by means of Divine truth: and, consequently, if they retain the doctrine of Divine influence at all, they are constrained to believe that an influence or power is imparted to the gospel, when it becomes the means of conversion, which it does not ordinarily possess, and which secures its triumph over the prejudice, and pride, and carnality of the heart. Against this opinion there are innumerable objections, which shall be considered in the subsequent Lecture.

LECTURE XXII.

REGENERATION.

THE CAUSE OF REGENERATION CONTINUED.

IN reference to the nature and manner of Divine agency, it has been stated that it must not be identified with the moral influence of Divine truth,—and that it does not secure its merciful purpose by imparting additional power to Divine truth. We proceed now to consider the objections which may be urged against this latter opinion.

First, It throws discredit upon Divine revelation. In all those cases in which the gospel is not successful, it virtually ascribes this want of success to the gospel itself; and, by further maintaining that it cannot enlighten and sanctify the mind unless additional energy be infused into it, it charges Jehovah with folly in having provided incompetent means for the accomplishment of his merciful purposes. The gospel is the spiritual medicine of the soul. In numberless cases, certainly, it does not restore the health of the soul: but let the blame be cast where it ought to rest. Let it never be forgotten that the fault is not in the medicine, but in the indisposition of sinners to take it. In a case where the gospel does not produce holy perceptions and affections, are we warranted to suppose that it is essentially incompetent to their production, even when by the power of faith it is brought to bear upon the mind? Ought we not rather to suppose that it has *not* been brought to bear upon the mind of this individual, in consequence of his rejection of its testimony? The latter, surely, is the true state of the case. I can scarcely imagine a greater mistake than one which I fear is committed by

many, who speak as if they thought that, when the gospel is scripturally understood and firmly believed, it is incapable of raising the affections from sin to holiness; from the world to God;—that even in this case some additional influence must be imparted to it, or that it would remain totally inoperative. To entertain this notion is virtually to maintain that the sinner may not be blameable even while he remains unsanctified, having by supposition exhausted his duty by believing the gospel. He has done, on this admission, all that God requires of him. He has taken the right medicine—taken it in the prescribed manner, and yet his spiritual malady remains. How could we avoid feeling that, if this were indeed the case, the fault would be in the medicine, and that he would be an object of pity, and not of censure? On these accounts, I cannot but strongly object to the phraseology of some who apply the words, “a dead letter,” to the word of God. If the terms were merely meant to intimate the fact that Divine revelation is never understood and received as the record of God without Divine influence, they would convey a most undeniable and important truth. But I fear that, in many cases at least, the words are designed to teach that the medicine itself is essentially inoperative; and, when this idea itself is conveyed to the mind of a sinner, it will veil the full extent of his guilt, by failing to fix his attention upon his own obstinate rejection of the medicine, as the direct and, indeed, exclusive cause of his remaining under the full power of spiritual disease.

Secondly, It supposes an operation which is not only unintelligible, but, as far as I can judge, impossible. The influence of the gospel upon the mind is moral influence—moral influence exclusively. It is the influence of truth, to enlighten and convince the understanding; and of motives, to excite and govern the affections. It results partly from the nature of the gospel, and partly from the nature of the mind to which its persuasive influence is adapted. It is an influence inseparable from the gospel—the present constitution of the mind remaining, and it is impossible to conceive of its being either diminished or increased. From the whole of the preceding

statements it follows, as a necessary consequence, that the actual influence of the gospel upon the minds of men, must vary according to the different states of those minds. This, indeed, is the case with all moral causes which, like the gospel, operate by presenting inducements to a certain mode of action. The external motive may, in one state of mind, be omnipotent; in another, entirely powerless: but there cannot possibly be a greater degree of power, i. e., tendency in the motive to secure the action, at one time, than at another. Take for illustration a case of instantaneous conversion. The gospel exerts no influence over the mind one hour—a mighty and uncontrollable influence the next. To ascribe this difference to some additional power, imparted to the gospel, is to lose sight of the difference which exists between physical and moral causes; and to confound the influence of the former with that of the latter. Additional power may be imparted to a physical cause which operates by contact, and impulse. A battering-ram, when brought into gentle contact only with the walls of a citadel, would effect no breach; but give to it the momentum which the strength of fifty or a hundred men can impart, and it becomes irresistible. It is, I have no doubt, the influence of some such material analogy as this, which has led to the mistake against which I am now contending. Perhaps, indeed, not one of those who maintain a special influence of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, while they contend, at the same time, that it is by means of Divine truth, (thus confounding Divine influence with spiritual renovation,) would avow the monstrous opinion that the gospel operates upon the mind of man after the manner of physical causes; they would disown the opinion if it were imputed to them personally. But I feel persuaded that the material analogy has more influence with them than they are aware of—that it has really formed and governed their opinions upon the subject.

The cause, then, of the mighty influence of the gospel, when it becomes the means of conversion, must not be sought for in some supposed change effected in the gospel itself. "The gospel," as I have said in another publication, "remains

what it was. Its motives are unchanged. The mind may be made to appreciate their excellence, and to feel their force, but this is surely by something being done to the mind, and not to the gospel;" a point, however, to which the attention of the reader will be more fully directed afterwards.

Thirdly, It would afford, at least, apparent ground, if it really exhibited the facts of the case, for impeaching the rectitude of the proceedings of the moral Governor. It has been seen, (vide Lectures on Sovereignty, page 99,) that, in reference to those who are involved in the same general sentence of condemnation, and who must stand at length at the judgment-seat, equity does require that the moral Governor should deal with all alike;—that the door of mercy (if it be opened) should be set open to all,—that the gospel should be preached to all,—that the same objective motives to receive it, should be presented to all;—and that at the great day, when one man is saved through believing, and another lost through rejecting the gospel, it must appear that the same substantial and radical inducements to receive it, had been presented to the latter individual, as to the former. Now, on the supposition that no more moral power is imparted to the gospel when it is rendered effectual to salvation than it habitually possesses, this is manifestly the case; but it is not so on the contrary assumption. To recur again to the case of instantaneous conversion, referred to a short time ago, the person, immediately adjoining the one who is brought to the knowledge of Divine truth, remains unaffected by the address of the preacher. Now, if it were possible to conceive of an influence being given at times to the truth to enlighten and sanctify, greater than that which is inherent in it, and essential to it; and, if it were the fact, that to this additional influence should be ascribed the success of the gospel in this case, would there not manifestly be a difference in the conduct of God towards these individuals, *as the moral Governor of the world*? And how could this be reconciled with the principles of righteous moral government? It is in vain to reply, as I have often heard it done, that, if an influence be exerted directly upon the heart of him who receives the gospel, the same objection will lie,

because a direct influence upon the heart does not emanate from God as *moral Governor*; whereas the gospel does. It is, indeed, the instrument of moral government. It is the drawing of the *Ruler*, not of the *Sovereign*. Now, if there be a more powerful drawing on the part of the *Ruler*, in the case of some than of others, might not the latter complain that the ways of God are not equal? On these accounts, as well as others, I reject the opinion that God renders the gospel effectual by imparting additional moral power to it. I pass on, now, to the next general remark in reference to the nature and manner of Divine agency. I observe, then,

Fourthly, That the influence for which we contend is exerted immediately or directly, i. e., not by means, upon the mind.

This is intimated, I apprehend, with sufficient distinctness in the sacred volume. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," says the apostle, "hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," or rather, to the light of the knowledge, &c., "in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) Few things are more manifest to my mind than that God's shining into the heart is represented here as something previous, in the order of nature, to our attaining the knowledge of the glory of God. It shines into our heart *to give the light*—to insure to us the enjoyment of it: "Except," said our Lord, "a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." To the same effect are such passages as the following:—"I will give them *a heart* to know me." (Jer. xxiv. 7.) "And the Lord opened the heart of Lydia," &c.; expressions which clearly imply, I imagine, that that Almighty energy from which spiritual knowledge resulted, was exerted immediately upon the heart, and not upon the truth, imparting to it additional power, and thus entering with it, or embodied in it, into the mind. I add, further,

That in the very nature of the case it must be so. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he *know* them, for they are spiritually discerned." I can form no conception of the meaning of these words, if

they are not intended to teach us that the mind, in its natural state, is morally incapable of taking just views of spiritual things; that their excellence and glory will not *appear* to it, because, in consequence of its perverted moral taste, the real excellence and glory of the gospel are not regarded as such. Here, indeed, is the great, I had almost said the exclusive difficulty, which accompanies the regeneration of a sinner. Give him spiritual and believing views of the things of the Spirit of God, and it is perfectly easy to account for the whole of the subsequent renovation which he undergoes; but *to give him those views*—this is the moral impossibility to be accomplished! Spiritual things appear to every mind, in an aspect which is governed by the state of that mind. Depravity of heart spreads a covering of deformity over the glorious character of God itself,—as the frost-glass scatters the hoar of winter over the verdure and loveliness of spring. Of what avail would it be, while the interposing glass remains, that some mighty miracle should array the landscape in charms yet more exuberant and delightful? It would only multiply the gloomy horrors of the scene. On the same principle, we ask, “how a fuller disclosure of the Divine character could succeed in conveying an attractive view of that character, to an ungodly man while he looks at it, as he must do, through the perverting medium of his own depravity?” How can it be doubted that an influence which is not exerted directly upon the mind would not go to the root of the evil? It is in consequence of a defect in the minds of sinners, and not in the gospel, that it is misunderstood and rejected. It is revealed with sufficient clearness; — it is accompanied with sufficient evidence of its truth. Were it possible for it to be stated ten thousand times more clearly than it is, and accompanied with ten thousand times more evidence, that would not relieve the defect which leads sinners to reject it. They would not repent though one should rise from the dead. “To suppose,” as I have stated in another work, “that God renders the gospel successful by communicating some additional and mysterious energy to it, is to suppose that the defect is in the truth, and not in the mind which rejects it. It is to suppose that there

is not light enough in the gospel to enlighten, nor purity enough to sanctify, so that more must be given to it. But to maintain that Divine influence is exerted directly and immediately upon the heart of a sinner, is to suppose that the defect is there, and it goes immediately to relieve it. And certainly the defect is in the sinner himself. There are spiritual objects to be contemplated and loved; they are possessed of unrivalled and infinite excellence; all their excellence is exhibited as clearly and strongly as language can exhibit it, by the gospel. But sinners have no eyes for excellence of this description." There must be an immediate, however inexplicable, operation of the Spirit of God upon the mind, called in Scripture, opening the heart, &c., before there can be a spiritual discernment of the things of the Spirit of God. The interposing glass must be removed, before their excellence, importance, and glory, can appear such to the mind.

The preceding remarks will throw some light upon a controversy, which existed a few years ago, between Mr. Fuller and Mr. M'Lean, in reference to the essential principles involved in which, some diversity of opinion, I believe, prevails amongst Calvinistic divines at the present day. It assumed rather a technical name in the hands of the above-named gentlemen, the question being stated thus, "Is a holy principle necessary to believing?" I imagine there was more of apparent, than of real opposition between the parties in this contest. Still there is an important difference of opinion between the two sentiments into which this particular question may be resolved, and which are the following:—"Does the primary influence of the Spirit of God upon the mind impart just views of spiritual objects, or produce what, for want of a better word, we may call a holy susceptibility or relish for those objects, in consequence of which they appear excellent to the mind; i. e., in other words, just views of them begin to be entertained?" Dwight, whose words I quote partly for the sake of fortifying my own sentiments, and partly also with the view to elucidate them, has given what I regard, upon the whole, as a very admirable statement of the two opinions which have been referred to. I would only premise that he seems

to regard the word "relish" as conveying more of a definite signification than I do. "It has been extensively supposed," he says, "that the Spirit of grace regenerates mankind by communicating to them new, clearer, and juster views of spiritual objects. The understanding being thus enlightened and convinced, the heart, it is supposed, yields itself to this conviction; and the man spontaneously becomes, under its influence, a child of God. I shall not attempt, here, to describe the metaphysical nature of the work of regeneration, nor to define, precisely, the manner in which it is accomplished; nor the exact bounds of the Divine and human agency in this great concern. Of these subjects I have not sufficiently distinct and comprehensive views, to undertake this employment with any satisfactory hope of success. Yet it appears to me clear, that the account which I have now given of this subject, is not scriptural nor just. Without a *relish* for spiritual objects, I cannot see, that any discoveries concerning them, however clear and bright, can render them pleasing to the soul. If they are unpleasing in their very nature, they cannot be made agreeable by having that nature unfolded more clearly. He who disrelishes the taste of wine, will not relish it the more, the more distinctly and perfectly he perceives that taste. Nor will any account of its agreeableness to others, however clearly given, and with whatever evidence supported, render the taste agreeable to him. To enable him to relish it, it seems indispensable that his own taste should be changed, and in this manner fitted to realize the pleasantness of the wine. Light is either evidence, or the perception of it; evidence of the true nature of the object which is contemplated, or the perception of that evidence. But the great difficulty in the present case is this;—the nature of the object perceived is disrelished. The more, then, it is perceived, the more it must be disrelished of course, so long as the present taste continues. It seems, therefore, indispensable, that in order to the usefulness of such superior light to the mind, its relish with respect to spiritual objects should first be changed. In this case, the clearer and brighter the views of such objects are, the more pleasing they may be expected to become to the mind.

"This, I apprehend, is the true progress of this work in the human soul. A relish for all spiritual objects, never before existing in him, is communicated to every man, who is the subject of regeneration, by the Spirit of God. Before this event, he disrelished all such objects; now, he relishes them all. Before, he was an enemy of God; now, he becomes a friend to God; before, he loved nothing, now, he loves every thing of a spiritual nature. He who has hitherto been an enemy to a good man, disrelishes every thing which pertains to him; his character, conduct, conversation, and opinion; his family, his friends, his very looks, nay, even the spot where he lives; and, in a word, every thing which is his. If you undertake to convince him, while this disrelish continues, that the object of his dislike is undeserving of all this; you may, indeed, present to him arguments, which he cannot answer, and silence his objections by the irresistible force of proof. You may explain to him, in the clearest manner, the excellencies of this object; and set them in such a light, that he may have nothing left to say against it. Should all this have been done, his dislike, in the case supposed, would still continue; his views, though enlarged, would be of exactly the same general nature; and his opposition to the hated object, instead of being diminished, would rather increase. We will now suppose this man to cease from his enmity, and to become a decided and sincere friend. A moment's thought will satisfy any mind, that, with the change of his relish, an universal change of his views, also, will take place. The very same things which formerly disgusted him, will now please him. What was formerly odious, will now become amiable. The evidences of worth and excellence, which before silenced, will now satisfy him. His eye, no longer jaundiced, will see every thing in its proper, native light; in its true character, importance, and desert; and will discern in what was before unpleasing, deformed, or disgusting, a beauty, loveliness, and lustre, wholly new."

The following remarks of Dwight, intended to illustrate that state of mind which he conceives to be necessary to just views of spiritual objects, are worthy of particular remark. His argument, indeed, only rendered it essential for him to

represent it as necessary to holy volitions; but it may be applied to holy, i. e., just perceptions.

“It has been frequently supposed, that the *Spirit of God regenerates man by immediately creating in him virtuous volitions*. All the volitions of all moral agents are, in my view, (as will, indeed, be pre-supposed by those of my audience who remember the sermons which I delivered on the nature of the human soul,) the acts of the agents themselves. The Spirit of God does not, in my view, when he regenerates mankind, create in them any volitions whatever; but merely communicates to them the relish for spiritual objects, which has been here mentioned.”

“When God created *Adam*, there was a period of his existence, after he began to be, antecedent to that in which he exercised the first volition. Every man, who believes the mind to be *something beside ideas and exercises*, and who does not admit the doctrine of casualty, will acknowledge, that, in this period, the mind of *Adam* was in such a state, that he was propense to the exercise of virtuous volitions, rather than of sinful ones. This state of mind has been commonly styled *disposition, temper, inclination, heart, &c.* In the Scriptures it usually bears the last of these names. I shall take the liberty to call it *disposition*. This disposition in *Adam* was the cause whence his virtuous volitions proceeded; the reason why they were virtuous, and not sinful. Of the metaphysical nature of this cause I am ignorant. But its existence is, in my own view, certainly proved by its effects. If the volitions of man are not immediately created, they are either caused by something in man, or they are casual. But they are not casual; for nothing is casual. And, even if some things were casual, these could not be; because they were regularly and uniformly virtuous; and it is impossible, that casualty should be a source of uniformity and regularity. There was, therefore, in the mind of *Adam*, certainly, a cause which gave birth to the fact, that his volitions were virtuous and not sinful. This cause of necessity preceded these volitions; and therefore certainly existed in that state of mind which was previous to his first volition. This state of mind, then, this disposition

of *Adam* existing antecedently to every volition, was the real cause why his volitions subsequently existing, were virtuous. It ought to be remarked here, that plain men, with truth, as well as with good sense, ascribe all the volitions of mankind to *disposition*, the very thing here intended, as their true cause."

"In regeneration, the very same thing is done by the Spirit of God for the soul, which was done for *Adam* by the same Divine Agent at his creation. The soul of *Adam* was created with a relish for *spiritual* objects. The soul of every man, who becomes a Christian, is *renewed* by the communication of the same relish. In *Adam* this disposition produced virtuous volitions. In every child of Adam, who becomes the subject of virtue, it produces the same effects."

I think Dwight might also have referred to the case of infants, regenerated by the Spirit of grace, for further illustration. The change produced upon their minds does not consist either in just views of Divine things, or holy affections towards them; for they are physically incapable of either. But the germ of holiness is implanted; some effect is produced which would lead, were the life of the child spared, to just apprehensions, and holy affections.

I would, also, refer the reader to the following statements of Dr. Hopkins, not that I altogether approve of their phraseology, as he will readily perceive; but because they powerfully support the general notion, that in regeneration there is a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the mind, effecting a change which, in the order of nature, is previously necessary to all just apprehensions of Divine truth.

"The subject of this operation, in which this change and effect is wrought, is the will or the heart; that is, the moral and not the natural powers and faculties of the soul. As depravity is wholly in the will or heart, the source and seat of all moral actions, the Divine operation directly respects the heart, and consists in changing and renewing that." (Vol. i., p. 454.)

"This point is particularly observed and stated, to expose and rectify a mistake which has been too often made, repre-

senting regeneration as consisting chiefly, if not wholly, in renewing the understanding, as distinguished from the will; and letting light into that, antecedent to any change of the heart, and in order to it; and by which light in the understanding, the will is inclined and turned from sin to holiness. This is turning this matter upside down, and has a dangerous and bad tendency. It supposes that human depravity lies in the understanding, and not in the will; or, at least, that it has its foundation and beginning in the former; and that when that comes right, the will or heart acts right, of course. The consequence is, that there is little or no moral depravity in the heart, that being ready to do its office well, when the understanding is set right: therefore, man is not blameable for his depravity, and not being holy; since his blindness, which alone is in the way of his acting right, is not dependent on his will, or owing to any disorders in that. It is, indeed, impossible to give true moral light and understanding to the depraved mind of man, by any operation whatsoever on the intellect, antecedent to the renovation of the will; for the darkness is in the latter, and consists in the wrong inclination of that; and therefore cannot be removed, but by renewing the heart."

"Others have supposed, that there is in regeneration an operation on the understanding or intellect first, in order to enlighten the mind; and then by Divine energy the will is renewed, and brought to comply with the light let into the understanding. But this is unscriptural, and contrary to the nature and order of things; and tends to lead to hurtful mistakes, as has been observed. Nothing is necessary but the renovation of the will, in order to set every thing right in the human soul; and if the will be not renewed, or a new heart be not given, by an immediate operation, no operation on any other faculty of the soul, and no supposeable or possible change can set the heart right, or renew it in the least degree. The Scripture makes no such distinction between the faculties of the soul in treating of this great matter; but represents the renovation of the will, or giving a new heart, as setting the whole soul right in all the powers and faculties of it."

“ The Divine operation in regeneration, of which the new heart is the effect, is immediate, or it is not wrought by the energy of any means as the cause of it; but by the immediate power and energy of the Holy Spirit. It is called a creation, and the Divine agency in it is as much without any medium, as in creating something from nothing. Men are not regenerated in the sense in which we are now considering regeneration, by light or the word of God. This is evident from what has been observed under the last particular. If the evil eye, which is total darkness, and shuts all the light out, be the evil, corrupt heart of man, then this corrupt heart must be renewed, in order to there being any true light in the mind, and previous to it. There must be a discerning heart, which is the same with a new heart, in order to see the light; and, therefore, this cannot be produced by light. The evil eye which shuts out all the light, cannot be cured, and made a single eye, by seeing the light: and the light cannot have any effect, or answer any end, till they are so far made single to admit the light; therefore, that operation which changes the evil eye to a single eye, cannot be by means of light; but must take place antecedent to any light, or any influence or effect that can be produced by it. It is said, the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things that were spoken by Paul. It would be a contradiction, and very absurd to say, that the word spoken by Paul, was that by which her heart was opened; for she knew not what he did speak, until her heart was opened to attend to his words, and understand them. Her heart was first opened, in order to his words having any effect, or giving any light to her. And this must be done by an immediate operation of the Spirit of God on her heart. This was the regeneration now under consideration, by which the heart was renewed, and formed to true discerning, like the single eye.” (Vol. i., pp. 456, 457.)

I will venture again to state, that the difference of opinion which has existed with reference to the question, “Is that influence which, according to the confession of all orthodox divines, is exerted in the regeneration of the soul, direct, or indirect?” is mainly to be traced to the overlooking of the dis-

tion which I have made between spiritual *influence*, and spiritual *renovation*. That the latter must be by means, no one, I think, can doubt, who understands the nature of the mind, and the meaning of terms; and that the former must be without means, is equally apparent to me. I might avail myself of the argument, that whether Divine influence in regeneration be exerted upon the mind, as affirmed in the third general observation, or upon the truth, in the manner stated in the second, it is still without means. No one can conceive that it is by any instrumentality that this supposed additional power is given to the truth; it must be by the immediate influence of the Spirit. The argument may be said to be subtle, but I believe it to be correct. Without dwelling upon it, however, I merely observe, that it is as manifest to my mind, that that influence which leads to the conversion of the sinner is exerted immediately upon the mind, as that the actual turning of the affections from sin to God, is effected by the moral influence of Divine truth.

Fourthly, The influence for which we contend emanates from God not in the character of a Ruler, but a Sovereign.

This statement, it will be observed, is in harmony with those which occur in the Lectures on Sovereignty. It is of great importance to recollect here, the nature of moral government, and in what respects it differs from what we may denominate physical government. The latter is exercised over beings incapable of acting themselves; or, if they have the capacity of action, it employs instinct, instead of reason, to secure the required actions. Moral government is the government of intelligent beings, possessing the power of action, by motives exhibited to their view, and adapted to awaken volition—the constituted cause of all those actions for which such beings are accountable to their Maker—by the good which these motives present to them. I need not say that man is the subject of this latter species of government, though not to the exclusion of the former. The laws of this government are to be found in the sacred Scriptures. The instruments or means of this government, are the threatenings and promises by which the laws are enforced. The gospel pro-

mises the glories of the world above, to those who repent, and believe; it threatens with eternal misery, all who persist in impenitence and rebellion. Now the tendency of these promises and threatenings to lead to right volition—to produce repentance and faith—is the influence which God employs as a moral Governor to secure obedient subjects. It is the only influence which, in that character, he can employ. He has formed the mind to will, or desire, that which appears to it good. He presents good, *objectively*, to the mind to induce volition, and consequent obedience. He can act in no other way in his rectoral character, because moral government is carried on by the presentation and influence of motives, or inducements. If the good which He presents to secure the purposes of his government, should not happen to appear good to the subjects of that government, it will not of course influence their volitions, and their conduct. But, in that unhappy case, the moral Governor, in that character, can do no more to effect his merciful intentions. I do not now mean that, in point of equity, he *should* do no more; but that moral government has literally exhausted its powers. The head of the government must not hold out a polluted good to influence the mind; so that, if that good which the gospel exhibits should not appear good to the subjects of moral government, he can bring no more influence to bear upon their minds without giving them another gospel; i. e., without promising a greater good if they repent and believe,—and threatening a greater evil if they continue rebellious;—both of which are impossible—the good at present promised, being the eternal enjoyment of himself; the evil at present threatened, everlasting banishment from himself!

It follows, then, that the influence which secures the conversion of the soul to God; emanates from him as a Sovereign,—that it is not moral influence,—or moral suasion, as it is sometimes called; and cannot, in the nature of the case, be so,—that it effects some change upon the state of the mind, in consequence of which the good, which the gospel exhibits objectively, is made to *appear* good; and consequently, to excite volition, and lead to obedience;—but that it is not necessary

to accountability. To affirm its necessity would lead us into interminable difficulties. It would constrain us to maintain that Jehovah is bound to convert all men. It would prove that the fall of man could not have taken place; for while spiritual objects appear good to the mind, it is morally certain that they will awaken holy volitions and affections. Were it the case that Jehovah, on the ground of equity, is bound not only to bestow upon his subjects a mind capable of distinguishing between right and wrong—of willing, or desiring, and loving what appears to it excellent; were he bound not only to proffer to them blessings of infinite value and to unfold their excellence in terms the most explicit and intelligible,—but, in addition to all this, were under an obligation to make these blessings appear excellent to them—then Adam in eating the forbidden fruit did not commit sin, for unquestionably abstinence had ceased to appear desirable before he partook of it; then men in general, in rejecting the great salvation, do not commit sin; for unquestionably spiritual blessings do not appear to them desirable, and hence they do not love and pursue them. That there are difficulties connected with the statements now made there can be no doubt; but if we are not disposed to admit that God bestows all that is necessary to accountability, when he presents objects infinitely worthy of our choice, so adapted to our spiritual and moral nature as to be capable of affording, whatever we may think of them, the most perfect blessedness which it is possible to enjoy; and presents them to a mind capable, from its physical constitution, of choosing the objects to which we now refer,—capable of making a right choice, and of course capable of making a wrong one;—if we are not satisfied to regard this as constituting a basis of accountability,—if we require any thing more, we shall find ourselves obliged to admit that the entrance of moral evil directly impeaches the rectitude of the moral Governor.

LECTURE XXIII.

REGENERATION.

THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION.

WHEN we assert the necessity of regeneration, we intend to affirm its absolute and universal necessity.

First, Its absolute necessity. Some changes are of such a nature that it is not a point of great importance whether they take place or not; others are eminently desirable; this is indispensable;—not, indeed, to the possession of health, or the acquisition of riches, or to the participation of that honour which cometh from men only,—but to the enjoyment of true happiness in the present life, and to admission into that world of glory, by which, in the case of believers, it is succeeded. Into the city of the New Jerusalem, which cometh down from above, “there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Rev. xxi. 27.) “Verily, verily,” said our Lord to Nicodemus, “except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 5.) The phrase, “the kingdom of God,” imports the great body of his subjects,—those over whom the Lord Jesus Christ—to whom the administration of the affairs of this kingdom is entrusted—reigns by his word, and his Spirit. Some of the members of this body are to be found on earth; others have been taken to heaven; but neither the militant nor the triumphant branch of this kingdom includes a single person who has not been born again. Into the visible church on earth, it is possible, indeed, for individuals, by assuming a form of godliness, to obtain admission

but as the Lord seeth the heart, they cannot pass into the church above. To this, regeneration is absolutely essential. We must certainly and for ever lose all the light, and all the blessedness, and all the glory of heaven, if, when called from the present state, we have not been made "new creatures in Christ Jesus."

Secondly, Its universal necessity. The term which our Lord employed in his conversation with Nicodemus, comprehends the whole of our race. The ruler addressed him, saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God," &c. Jesus answered him, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man," i. e., any man—whether he be Jew or Gentile, bond or free, rich or poor, learned or illiterate—whether he be a prince or a subject—whether his conduct be in harmony with the letter of the law, or whether it be visibly and grossly profane;—except he be "born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This solemn asseveration, by the Son of God himself, of the necessity of regeneration, neither requires proof, nor is it susceptible of any; but, as it may help to strengthen the impression which his words are calculated to produce, I proceed to show, that the declaration is in perfect harmony with the entire statements of Divine revelation, as well as with the conclusions which flow from a consideration of the very nature of the case itself. The necessity of regeneration is then attested,

First, By the uniform testimony of the inspired writers. When Nicodemus expressed his astonishment at the language of Christ, our Lord replied, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"—thus intimating that the doctrine, which has just been stated, was taught so plainly in the Old Testament Scriptures, that his ignorance of it might justly awaken surprise. "It is not meant by this that the particular phrase of being born again, or regenerated, occurs in the Old Testament writings, or that it is there expressly said, that no unregenerate man shall be admitted into God's kingdom. But, that what is in effect the same thing, is affirmed in innumerable passages." There is not, in fact, a single page in that important portion of Divine revelation which does not contribute to teach the solemn truth, that no

man who persists in a course of iniquity can, on leaving the present state, obtain admission into the heavenly temple. We may especially refer to the following declarations as maintaining it, and as being thus in entire harmony with the language of our Lord to Nicodemus. The first is contained in the 29th chapter of Deuteronomy, in which Jehovah is represented as making his covenant and his oath, not only with those who actually appeared before him when Moses summoned all unto him, but with those who were not there that day; "Lest," he adds, in the 18th verse, "there should be among you, man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;" in other words, lest there should be a man among you who, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things; "and it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him; but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." (Ver. 19, 20.) "God," says the Psalmist, "is angry with the wicked." How, indeed, can it be otherwise, since his nature and his laws are holy, while their hearts are so thoroughly depraved that the carnal mind may be said to be enmity itself against God? He is, accordingly, angry—angry with them *every day*; so that the sinner, whether he wakes or sleeps—whether he goes abroad or remains at home, is an object of Divine displeasure; and though the forbearance of God is great, yet, adds the Psalmist, "If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready; he hath also prepared for him the instruments of death." (Psa. vii. 12, 13.) A still more awful declaration, exhibiting the same truth, is contained in the 11th Psalm, ver. 5, 6; "The Lord loveth righteousness; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and

an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup." The testimony of Solomon, also, is to the same effect; for when comparing, or rather contrasting, the death of the righteous and the wicked, he says, Prov. xiv. 32, "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." In precise harmony with this, also, is the solemn language of Isaiah, "Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." (Isa. iii. 11.) The invitations and promises, also, which he was directed by Jehovah to address to the wicked, set before us the same solemn truth. "Let the wicked forsake his evil way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord who will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon;"—since the language clearly implies that, unless he forsake his evil way, he cannot obtain mercy from God:—and this implication is still more strikingly apparent in the corresponding passages in Ezekiel's prophecy. (Isa. lv. 7; Ezek. xviii. 31; xxxiii. 11.)

The entire language of the New Testament, as well as the Old, is adapted to evince the necessity of regeneration. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day," adds the Saviour, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matth. vii. 21—23.) In the parable of the tares, also, after informing us that the tares represent the children of the wicked one, he adds, (chap. xiii. ver. 40—42,) "As, therefore, the tares are gathered, and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth!" In the account of the proceedings of the judgment-day, recorded in the 25th chapter of Matthew, we are assured that he will address the unconverted in the following language:

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Ver. 41.) "And these," it is added, "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." (Ver. 46.)

The apostle Paul declares, also, that at the great day of account, the Judge will render "to those who are contentious, and do not obey the truth," (i.e., who do not receive the gospel, and live under its influence,) "but obey unrighteousness, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man," he adds, "that doeth evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." (Rom. ii. 8, 9.) To the same effect is his assurance, in the 12th of Hebrews, ver. 14, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, chap. i. ver. 7—9, he tells us "that the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Nor is Paul the only apostle who affirms the necessity of regeneration, for Peter calls the day of judgment, "the day of perdition of ungodly men." (2 Pet. iii. 7.) Jude, also, must be considered as supporting the testimony of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, when he declares, ver. 14, 15, that he prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints. To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." And, to close this long list of quotations, John, writing under the guidance of the Spirit of God, assures us that "into the New Jerusalem, which cometh down from above, there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but those," and those only, "who are written in the Lamb's book of life;" and who, by the power of Divine grace exerted upon them, in consequence of that circumstance, are made "new creatures in Christ Jesus."

We have thus seen that the necessity of regeneration is

supported by the uniform testimony of the inspired writers. We have brought testimonies to this effect from the Old and New Testament, from the prophets and the apostles; and since they all spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, we ought to consider every passage which has been quoted, as the voice of God himself, proclaiming in various forms of words the solemn truth, "Ye must be born again." How fallacious, then, are the hopes of the ungodly! Since Jehovah is immutable, the day of judgment must find him as determined to punish those who die in their sins, as when he issued the first threatening against them. How then can they escape? Will they be able to elude his notice? Is it possible for them to be lost in the crowd? No. When the whole human family shall appear at his tribunal, every individual transgressor, in the vast assembled multitude, will feel that he is as much under the immediate scrutiny of the Judge, as if he were the only delinquent! And, if they cannot escape his notice, can they resist his power? Can they pluck the thunderbolts of vengeance from the hands of Omnipotence? It were worse than madness to imagine this. "Let the potsherd of the earth strive with the potsherd of the earth, but wo be to that man who striveth with his Maker." He will address them, and accompany his address with an energy which not the whole universe, were it disposed to make the attempt, could resist, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting fire, but the righteous into life eternal."

The declarations of the God of truth ought to convince every ungodly man that without regeneration he cannot see the kingdom of God; yet we know they do not always produce this effect; I proceed, therefore, to show that the asserted necessity of regeneration is,

II. In harmony with the conclusions which flow from a consideration of the nature of the case itself.

On this subject it is by no means uncommon to find the grossest mistakes committed by various individuals. There are persons who seem to imagine that there is no interposing

obstacle to the eternal felicity of the ungodly, but the determination of Jehovah to close against them the gates of the celestial city. They forget that, constituted as man is, misery is the natural and necessary result of unholy character;—a sentiment which should be impressed with great earnestness upon the attention of men. For God himself does not attempt the impossible task of saving his people *in* their sins, but *from* them. Whatever may be conceived to be the agency of the Judge in the punishment of the ungodly, it cannot be doubted that the misery of the damned will result directly and immediately from the state of their own minds. The unrestrained indulgence of all the malevolent and angry passions, which God has rendered it misery to experience,—the never-dying worm of an accusing conscience,—the unquenchable fire of self-reproach,—the maddening influence of despair,—will constitute the future hell of the wicked; and, if the hand of God should never directly touch them, the doleful abode to which they are consigned must be the constant scene of “weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

These remarks are adapted to show that the sentence of the great day of account will not declare the punishment which, by arbitrary infliction, the unregenerate are to be made to undergo,—but the misery which, considering their mental constitution, must necessarily flow from the moral disease with which they are afflicted,—from the inveterate and incurable depravity of their own hearts. The torments of the damned, in short, will not result from the place to which they are adjudged, though it be the place of torment, but from the dispositions which they will carry into it. The hell of the sinner is in his own bosom. He carries it about with him, as his perpetual tormentor, wherever he goes; and, were it possible for him to enter heaven by stealth, it would accompany him into the presence of God himself, and poison the very water of life of which its blest inhabitants are destined to drink! Yet, though it is thus impossible for unregenerate men to experience happiness hereafter, it is a most difficult matter to lodge this conviction in their minds. Ignorant of the nature of celestial bliss, and decking the mansions above with those charms

which are adapted to their unsanctified taste, they are apt to imagine that, if the Judge of all, at the great day, could be induced to treat them with lenity, or that, if they could elude his notice, and pass in the midst of a crowd through the gates of the celestial city, all would then be well with them for eternity. It has never occurred to them that it is possible for any being to be miserable in heaven. And yet such is unquestionably the case. We read of the angels who kept not their first estate; whose pride, prompting to apostacy and rebellion, led to their dethronement and ruin. The misery, then, of these unhappy spirits commenced in the world above. There was hell in heaven, if we may so speak, before they were ejected from it; and the torments which they now endure do not result from the chains with which they are bound, but from the demons of envy and malevolence which reside in their bosoms. Were it possible, then, for an unconverted man to enter heaven, it would yield no delight to him;—its duties would be irksome—its pleasures insipid and joyless.

1st, Without regeneration, the duties of the heavenly world would be irksome. Heaven is a land of rest, but not of inactivity. While our relations to God, and to the respective members of the family above, continue, there will remain duties to be performed even there. Hence “those who came out of great tribulation,” are represented, in one of the sublime visions granted to John, as “standing before the throne,” and as “serving God day and night in his temple;” and the ascription of blessing and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, constitutes one important branch of the service which they render. Now is this a duty which could yield any delight to an unconverted man? In those statements which are given us by the ungodly of the objects and exercises which are essential to their enjoyment, is the service of God ever included? Is it a fact that they derive pleasure, in this world, from the celebration of his perfections, and especially of that illustrious display of them which is to be seen in the great and glorious work of human redemption? Is it not, on the contrary, the case that they derive no pleasure whatever from such exercises—that

they are indeed a weariness to them? Is there not abundant reason to think that they would never voluntarily engage in them? Now if such be the case with them on earth, would it not continue to be so in heaven, were they to enter it with an unaltered state of mind? How could the mere difference of place, whatever may be the nature of that difference, produce any difference in their feelings, in this respect? Must not the objects and engagements, which are grateful to an unrenewed mind on earth, be grateful to it in heaven? Must not the engagements which are destitute of charm to such a mind in the present world, be equally void of it in the future state? No rational being can doubt it for a moment. While the identity of the inner man continues—while the depravity of the heart remains unsubdued, no change of time or of place—not even elevation from earth to heaven, can render a moral exercise delightful, which had been previously disgusting. We must be born again, or the duties of the heavenly world will prove unpleasant and irksome.

2dly, Without regeneration the pure and spiritual delights of the world above would yield no measure of enjoyment. I have said the pure and spiritual delights of heaven, for holiness is inscribed upon all its duties and enjoyments. The bliss of heaven does not spring from any of those sources from which men of the world seek to attain it. It comes from a quarter from which they never sought it. It is of a nature for which they have no taste and relish. Were all the streams of heavenly glory accessible to an unconverted man, in this world, they would be to him insipid, if not distasteful. How, then, can they be expected to yield delight in heaven? The bliss of heaven is holiness. The perfection of knowledge and purity, to which the people of God will there attain—their final and complete deliverance from all darkness of the understanding, all impurity of the affections, all perverseness of the will—transforming them as it will do into the image of God,—will confer upon them a portion of the same enjoyment which he himself experiences. “From the perfection of holiness which will there be wrought into the soul, there will naturally arise,” as it has been justly observed, “an unspeakable

complacency and joy, resembling, in some degree, that which the blessed God possesses in the survey of the infinite and unspotted rectitude of his own most holy nature." It is manifest that both Old and New Testament saints possessed this view of the nature and source of heavenly joy. "I shall be satisfied," said a psalmist, "when I awake with thy likeness." And "when he shall appear," adds the beloved disciple, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Since, then, such is the bliss of heaven, the necessity of regeneration is apparent. This will more strikingly appear if we enumerate some of the individual sources of heavenly bliss : and in doing this I observe,

First, That the Scriptures represent the presence and enjoyment of God as constituting one of these sources. "As for me," said David, "I shall behold thy face in righteousness;" and he speaks of this as not only essential to perfect enjoyment, but as conferring it. At the time when he uttered these words, David had much in possession, and more in prospect. He was the son-in-law of the reigning monarch; and he had the promise of the God of truth that, at the decease of Saul, he should ascend the throne himself. But worldly possessions, and worldly glory, could not fill his capacious mind. Nothing less than the presence, and favour, and enjoyment of the God who made him, could do this; and, therefore, in all the sacred glow of confidence and anticipation, he exclaimed, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." "Blessed," said our Lord, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" be admitted to a beatific view of his perfections, and enjoy him as the portion of his soul. But this assurance is only cheering to those who love God. To all unregenerate men, God is an enemy; and, what is more, he is an omnipotent enemy. He can destroy both body and soul in hell! The prospect of seeing God is no solace to them. They will, on the contrary, employ all the energies of their minds—will bury themselves in business, and plunge into dissipation, and run into the most fearful and shameful excesses, to banish all thoughts of God from their minds. Rather than encounter their Maker, they would flee to the very ends of the earth! How, then, could the presence of God be a source of joy to such an individual in heaven?

Secondly, The Scriptures represent the presence of the Redeemer, in his glorified state, as constituting another source of heavenly bliss. "If I go away," said he to the disciples, with inexpressible tenderness, "I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." And to be with Christ—to see him as he is—and to be made like to him, must appear, to the holy taste of every converted man, the very summit of bliss. Hence the apostle Paul, in the vigour of life, and in the midst of a splendid career of usefulness, declared, that he had "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." Where is the renewed mind which does not feel—that to see Him, who was once a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, exalted far above all principalities and powers,—to behold the despised and rejected of men, surrounded by a bright and countless host of adoring spirits,—and to recognise in this exalted one a brother and a friend,—must prove the source of ineffable and eternal delight? But he is not a brother and a friend to such as have not been born again. To them he is an enemy; by them he will be found an inexorable Judge: and, though it be difficult to rouse a lamb to vengeance, there is no wrath so dreadful as the wrath of the Lamb! What possible pleasure could the presence of Christ, in heaven, afford to unconverted men? How could they bear to look upon him, whose authority they have contemned, whose laws they have broken, whose grace they have slighted, whose ordinances they have treated with contempt? In what language but the following could they expect him to address them, "Because I called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hand, and ye did not regard; but ye have set at nought my counsels, and would none of my reproofs, I also, will laugh at your calamity, I will mock now that your fear is come?" It is absolutely necessary to be born again to derive enjoyment from the presence of Christ in heaven. We must be made to love his character, and person, and work; and then, to be with him, to behold his glory—the glory which he had with his Father before the world was—will prove the spring of perennial and infinite enjoyment.

Thirdly, The Scriptures represent the society of angels,

and of glorified spirits; as constituting another source of the happiness of heaven. Without regeneration this would, however, yield us no joy; because that society is holy society. "Ye are come," said the apostle to the believing Hebrews, "to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, enrolled in heaven"—"and to the spirits of the just *made perfect*." What is there in such society as this,—the society of *angels* who kept their first estate, of the *redeemed from among men*, completely transformed into the image of God,—to afford enjoyment to an unsanctified mind? "Two cannot walk together," we are taught, "unless they be agreed." Where the tastes, and pursuits, and habits of persons are dissimilar, especially where they are utterly discordant, instead of finding pleasure in mutual intercourse, it is manifest that each must feel the company of the other to be an intolerable nuisance. Confine an illiterate peasant with a company of philosophers, or a philosopher with persons unacquainted even with the elements of knowledge, and who glory in their ignorance,—and, without the gift of prophecy, it were easy to predict that each would most earnestly long for the hour of emancipation.

From these general principles we draw the conclusion, that the holy society of heaven would yield no happiness to an unconverted man. But why should we resort to a process of reasoning on this point, when fact, whose verdict is still more unequivocal than reason, proclaims, in a manner not to be mistaken, that the company of holy angels, and of holy men, would not prove a source of enjoyment to a person who had not been renewed in the spirit of his mind? Do such men, in this world, desire the company of the people of God? Do they delight to meet, and unite with them in conversation which has for its topic the solemn and all-important concerns of eternity? So far is this from being the case, that, if the conscience of such men were to give its testimony, it would confess that scarcely was any other thing felt to be so wearisome and disgusting. And how should it be otherwise in heaven? Imagine, for a moment, an individual whose heart is enmity against God—and such is the character of every

unrenewed heart,—an individual who hates every spiritual object, and exercise, and duty, and enjoyment—and such is the state of moral feeling of every unrenewed man;—imagine such an individual *introduced* into the company of “the just made perfect,” *listening* to them for a time, while they discourse together on the great mystery of redeeming love, and then, inspired by the sacred theme, strike all at once their golden harps, and pour forth a noble anthem of praise “to him who was slain, and had redeemed them by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;”—imagine him seeing and hearing all this, would he possess a single feeling in common with them? Would the sacred inspiration of gratitude and devotion fill his soul? And, totally devoid of congeniality with the heavenly worshippers, could he derive any pleasure from their society? It is impossible, in the very nature of the case, that the holy enjoyments of heaven should yield any delight to an unholy mind. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Fact and experience declare this,—the constitution of the mind, and the nature of heavenly glory, the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, the law and the prophets, the gospels and the epistles, the apostles and the evangelists,—all unitedly declare to every member of the human family to whom their voice reaches, “Ye *must*,” yes, “*must*, be born again!”

APPENDIX.

It was my design to introduce, into the body of this work, some observations upon certain statements relative to one of the subjects discussed in it, to be found in Mr. Stuart's Commentary upon the Epistle to the Romans. It appeared, however, on subsequent reflection, that to prosecute the intention would lead me too far out of my way. The character and attainments of this distinguished author, clearly entitle his writings to the candid and serious attention of British Christians; yet, as truth should be dearer to us than any thing else, I am compelled to add, that the work referred to above, contains statements which I regret to see—some that appear to me self-contradictory—and one at least which will not, I trust, be readily admitted by my brethren in the ministry, or by the churches with which they stand connected. I allude to the following words: "But where has Paul taught that a man is justified by faith alone; and that evangelical good works are not an essential condition of his justification before God?" (Page 506, third edition.)

The laboured criticism by which Mr. Stuart endeavours to prove that the assertion, "a man is justified by faith, *without the deeds of the law*," is not at variance with the passage just quoted, appears to me to have been suggested, and rendered necessary, by his theology. I cannot resist the impression, that it has too much of the appearance of an attempt to explain away the obvious meaning of the words. Surely, if, from the explicit declaration of Paul, "a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law," we may not draw the conclusion, that simply crediting the record of God concerning his Son, is all that is essential to justification, it would be difficult to extract a meaning from any words whatever. Mr. Stuart, however, tells us that the phrase, "works of law," means perfect obedience; and that the amount of what the apostle intended to say is, that we may obtain justification by faith, even though we are destitute of perfect obedience. But if *ἐργων νόμον* denote, in the 28th verse, perfect obedience, must not the same meaning be attached, in the 20th verse, to the words? And would not the apostle, in that case, assert—impugning the *law*, not the *obedience* rendered to it—that a man cannot be justified by perfect obedience? Now, is this true? Was it really the intention of the apostle to declare that the law is essentially incapable of securing justification? Did he not design to impugn the *obedience* of men—not the *law*,—and to say that such works of the law as they had, or fancied they had, would not secure justifica-

tion, because not commensurate with the demands of the law? The phrase *ἐργων νόμου* does, indeed, mean actions which the law requires, in both the 20th and the 28th verse,—and there is obviously no change in its signification—i. e., personal obedience; but in neither of the verses does it appear to denote “perfect obedience.”

My main object, however, in this note is to point out certain inconsistencies, as they appear to me at least, into which Mr. Stuart has fallen, and which seem to have partially, though not entirely, resulted from attaching to the term “imputation” more than its scriptural import, as developed in page 258 of this volume; and from disregarding the precise sense affixed to it by those who employ it in reference to Adam and Christ.

In his summary of the contents of Rom. v. 12—19, he explains the phrase “sin entered into the world,” as follows: “Sin entered (*commenced*) by the offence of Adam,”—leaving us to suppose his meaning to be—for such is the significancy of the words—that Adam was the *first* sinner. Yet, in page 200, we find a logical and conclusive argument to show that such cannot be the apostle’s meaning: “If now,” he says, “it was a principal object with the apostle here, to point out specifically and with exactness the first author of transgression, how could he omit mentioning Eve?” who was in the transgression, i. e., he says, “first transgressed.” Notwithstanding this, however, which would seem to imply that sin entered in a different sense from *commencing*,—entered, i. e., in the sense of bringing obnoxiousness to the suffering of its penal consequences, upon the race, he reverts again, in page 208, to this rejected sense of *commencing*, and tells us that the meaning of the verse is as follows: “By Adam’s first offence, sin and death invaded the world of mankind; and having thus invaded it, they have been marching through it, and carrying on their conquests ever since.”

In his note upon the *θάνατος* which was *δι' ἐνός ανθρώπου*, he acknowledges that he sees “no *philological* escape from the conclusion, that death, in the sense of *penalty for sin in its full measure*, must be regarded as the meaning of the writer here.” (Page 203.) In commenting upon the 15th verse, he grants, as he says we must do, that the many (all) die (come under sentence of death) through Adam, or by means of him; and he afterwards adds, “In regard to *ἀνθρώπων*, I must refer the reader to what is said on *θάνατος*, under verse 12th. I would merely remark, that if *θάνατος* means, as I have there stated it to mean, *evil of any kind*, in this world and the next:” (*any!* Why this change of phraseology? He had not stated it to mean evil of *any*, but of *every* kind,—declaring expressly that it “is impossible to limit the word death,”—“that it designates the whole penalty of sin,” and that “if Adam’s sin was a real sin, and the *greatest* of all sins, then death in its most extensive sense must have been the penalty attached to it”)—“then,” he adds, “it is true, that Adam did by his offence cause *θάνατος* to come on all without exception,” &c. Now, one would certainly have supposed him to mean—what seems to follow irresistibly from his premises—that *exposedness* to death, in its most exten-

give sense, or to the full penalty of sin, came upon all men;—not, indeed, the actual *endurance* of death in this sense, because the dispensation of mercy, which immediately succeeded the fall, virtually abrogated that part of the curse which stretched into eternity, by suspending the everlasting condition of men on their acceptance or rejection of mercy, one should, I repeat, have expected him to mean this: and, accordingly, in *Excursus* the fourth, he admits that the “*τυπος* of the apostle may have respect to the highest penalty on the one hand, and the highest blessings on the other;” only, he adds, it must be understood, when thus extended, not of penalty in the higher sense as *actually* inflicted, nor of blessings in the higher sense as *actually* bestowed, but of *exposedness* to the penalty, on the one hand, and *exposedness* to blessings, on the other.” (Page 513.) And yet, though his premises oblige him to admit that the disobedience of Adam, (i. e., of itself, and viewing it as it should be viewed, unconnected with the subsequent dispensation of mercy) brought *exposedness* to death, in its highest sense, upon all men; and though he further *actually* admits, in the passage just quoted, that it *did* bring this exposedness to death upon all men, he yet, with great self-inconsistency, as it appears to me, denies, p. 222, that all men are directly exposed to death in this sense by Adam; and affirms that, in the ultimate and highest sense of death, they are only directly exposed to it by their own acts. The argument by which he attempts to sustain this latter denial and affirmation, appears to me singularly illogical; and to be such altogether as nothing but the difficulty of maintaining a false position could have drawn from such a reasoner as Mr. Stuart. “It needs no more,” he says, “be maintained that all are *equally exposed* to *θάνατος* in its fullest, highest, and most awful sense, without any act of their own, than that all men *partake* of the *χάρισμα* of Christ, in its highest sense, without any act of their own,” &c. *Partake* of the *χάρισμα* of Christ! Is that the proper opposite of *exposure* to death by Adam? Mr. Stuart should have shown that Christ did not bring the *possibility* of life to all men without any act of their own—or, in his own phraseology—*exposure* to life. “To say,” he continues, “that *οι πολλοι ἀπέθανον δια Αδάμ*, is not to say that all have the sentence *executed* on them in its highest sense.” Clearly not. To sentence a man to death is not to hang him. But who ever supposed the two things to be identical? Admitting, as Mr. Stuart does, that all die in Adam, he should have shown, to sustain his principles, not that the sentence in its highest sense is not inflicted upon all—which no one believes—but that all did not become *exposed* with Adam to death, in the fullest sense, as far as they were capable of enduring it. Mr. Stuart, as well as a very recent writer, fails, as I cannot but think, to make the necessary distinction between what the cup of threatening, put into the hand of Adam, *contained*, and what it actually *poured out* upon the race; or between what man, by the original curse, *was exposed to*, and what he actually *endures*, in consequence of it. The interposition of mercy took the bitterest ingredient out of the cup. The Saviour having died, no man will suffer eternal death on account of Adam’s sin.

I dare not, however, add with Messrs. Stuart and Gilbert—I cannot but think it very unwise to take that line of argument—that it would have been essentially unjust to subject the race, through the one offence, to a legal exposure to it.

Mr. Stuart has been charged by some of his own countrymen, with professedly denying the imputation of Adam's sin to the race, while he substantially admits it.

Let us see what foundation there is, or if any, for this charge. I begin by referring to a few passages in which he seems virtually to acknowledge what he subsequently rejects. Remarking upon Romans v. 12, he says, "Now while this asserts the fact that all have become sinners, and have come under condemnation, it does also intimate by implication, *that the whole of what has come upon men, stands connected with the introduction by Adam of sin and death into the world.* I cannot therefore agree with those commentators who find in this verse no intimation of such a connexion of all men with Adam." (P. 206.) In this way, we see, quite plainly, that Adam was a *τυπος* of Christ, because what he did affected the *whole of the human race*, to a certain extent, even without any concurrence or act of their own." (P. 220.) "If *θάνατος* means evil of any kind, in this world and in the next, then it is true that Adam did, by his offence, cause *θάνατος* to come on all without exception, inasmuch as all his race are born destitute of holiness, and in such a state that their passions will, whenever they become moral agents, lead them to sin. All, too, are the heirs of more or less suffering. It is true, then, that all suffer on Adam's account; that all are brought under more or less of the sentence of death; that *οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον*." (P. 222.) "But still you admit," stating the language of an objector, "that the whole human race became degenerate and degraded, in consequence of the act of Adam." "I do so," replies Mr. Stuart. "I fully believe it. I reject all the attempts to explain away this. I go further; I admit not only the loss of an original state of righteousness to all, in consequence of Adam's first sin, but that temporal evils and death have come, of course, on all by means of it. I admit that all are born in such a state that it is now certain they will be sinners as soon as they are moral agents, and that they will never be holy until they are regenerated," &c. (P. 235.) Again, anticipating an objection that, admitting all this, he cannot consistently deny that the sin of Adam is imputed to the race, i. e., that they endure the consequence or the punishment of it, Mr. Stuart says—"That I have admitted thus much, in regard to the present world, and sufferings in our present state, and also the moral degradation of our nature, in consequence of Adam's fall, I readily concede; I do fully believe all this; but this is, after all, something very different from *proper punishment*." (P. 521.) Why, whoever dreams, we are constrained to ask Mr. Stuart, of conceiving it as *proper punishment*, any more than that the enjoyment, by believers, of the consequences of the work of Christ is to them *proper reward*? All this is aside from the point. The question is not whether it is proper punishment to the race, but whether the race—suffering these consequences of Adam's fall—were not legally exposed to suffer them.

in consequence of a previous constitution, which determined that the permanent condition of the *αἱ πόλεις* should depend upon the conduct of their progenitor. In the ardour of his zeal to show that the loss of original righteousness, exposure to sufferings, &c., are not *proper punishment*; he actually takes the ground—not professedly, of course, yet really, or his argument is invalid—that the *fall* was a blessing; because we are now, he states, “notwithstanding the numerous and dreadful evils occasioned by the *fall*, under a far more favourable dispensation, in respect to an opportunity for *making sure* of our final happiness, than we should have been by being placed in the original condition of Adam.” (P. 512.) Now, supposing this to be true, did the *fall* bring us into this favourable situation, or the succeeding dispensation of mercy? Surely the loss of original righteousness can never be any thing but an evil; and it is an evil, let it be observed, directly accruing to the race, by Mr. Stuart’s own acknowledgment, in consequence of Adam’s transgression.

Now, what is this but the imputation of Adam’s sin to the race, in consequence of a Divine constitution that he, and they, should be treated as if they were one? Destitution of original righteousness, in the case of the race, is the result of the withholding of that special influence of the Holy Spirit which is the original source and sustainer of every thing spiritually good in the human mind. Mr. Stuart admits that the race *lost* this righteousness (i. e., that the race would otherwise have had it) by the one offence; i. e., God judicially withholds from the race, what he judicially withdrew from the head of the race (viz., sovereign influence;) in other words, he treats the race as he treated its head; or, which is, in fact, the same thing, the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity.

But no, Mr. Stuart will not allow this: “Adam’s first sin was connected with the sin and consequent condemnation of the race,” he admits; nay, that “it was, in some sense or other, a preparatory or occasional cause:” but we must not suppose that it was imputed to us, or that we are obnoxious to punishment on account of it. All this is, to me, very unaccountable. We suffer the consequences of Adam’s sin, but the sin is not imputed to us! How, then, do we come to suffer its consequences? Is not this suffering of its consequences the very imputation which is denied? What does Mr. Stuart understand by imputation? Does he conceive it to mean impartation, or implantation? What does he intend by saying that Adam’s sin was an occasional cause of our sin? That it might be, on his principles, a secondary or occasional cause of the future misery of man, by deteriorating his moral condition, and so exposing him to more imminent peril of losing eternal life, I admit; but what idea can be attached to the statement that it was the occasional or secondary cause of this deteriorated condition itself? Surely the native want of original righteousness had the one transgression for its direct, its exclusive cause (i. e., the sin of Adam was imputed to the race;) since the non-exertion of Divine influence, which would have given moral integrity to the minds of the race, as it did to the mind of Adam, cannot, without the grossest abuse of terms, be regarded as its cause.

Some of Mr. Stuart's mistakes and contradictions, as I cannot but deem them, have been recently very severely animadverted upon, by Robert Haldane, Esq., of Edinburgh, in his commentary upon the first five chapters of the epistle to the Romans. This work contains some admirable expositions of evangelical truth, (blended with other statements which appear to me very objectionable,) and it well deserves the attention of all whose minds have been brought into contact with that of the American philologist: yet it admits of serious doubt whether it is adapted to effect the good at which, no doubt, its author aimed. There is, very unfortunately, an apparent air of dogmatism about all Mr. Haldane's writings—a seeming consciousness of something like infallibility—a somewhat unceremonious mode of putting an opponent out of the way, by telling him, in tolerably plain terms, that he is wrong, and Mr. H. himself right, which appears to me any thing but adapted to convince and persuade. These faults have not less than their usual prominence in this work. He asserts where, as many will think, he should reason, and rebukes where he should caution; and, though it must be admitted that many of his statements demand, as well as deserve, the most serious attention of Mr. Stuart, and of all who may be disposed to adopt the theological views of that writer, yet it is much to be feared that his confident assertions, his unsparing censures, his fierce denunciations of Mr. Stuart as a heretic of not less black a hue than “those who troubled the churches of Galatia, whom Paul wished to be cut off,” his uncalled-for appropriation of the insane censure of Carson, that Mr. Stuart's works are more dangerous among Christians than the works of Priestley,—it is really to be apprehended that these and other blemishes will destroy the influence of the book upon the persons it was intended to benefit, unless, perchance, they should have more of the meek, and patient, and gentle spirit of our holy religion,—more of tender, as well as holy love, blended with fidelity, than is possibly to be found in the bosom of their assailant himself.

Mr. Haldane's views of the nature of the connexion between Adam and the whole of the race harmonize neither with those of Mr. Stuart, nor with those which have been presented in the previous part of this volume. Mr. H. seems perfectly sure that he is right; he writes as if he could not be mistaken; as if *his conception* of the vinculum existing between the one offence, and our endurance of the consequence of that offence, constituted an integral part of Divine revelation; so that hesitation to admit the justness of that conception is, in fact, the rejection of the Divine testimony. I must be permitted to doubt whether this manner of defending even the truth is best adapted to promote the interests of truth. But still the important question is, Are the conceptions of Mr. H. in reference to the vinculum correct, or in harmony with Divine revelation? Let us see, first, what they are. The prevailing sentiment among Calvinistic divines, at least as far as I have been able to ascertain it, is, that a connexion was established by God, between Adam and the race, of such a nature as that the latter were to share with him in the consequences of that act, on his abstinence.

from which his permanent standing in holiness and happiness was suspended. As the result of this connexion, it would necessarily happen that, when he fell, the race would be treated, as far as it was possible; as he, the head of the race, was treated; i. e., his sin would be imputed to them, or, in other words, its consequences would reach to them. But does this satisfy Mr. Haldane? By no means. He maintains that the sin of Adam was as really and truly theirs as it was the sin of Adam himself; that every believer is bound to acknowledge, and confess, that he is *guilty* of Adam's sin; and, lest any one should suppose that by *guilty* he merely means legally exposed to the consequences of that sin, he tells us, in effect, that this guilt is *previous* to the legal exposure and imputation, and is, in fact, the foundation of the imputation. Adam's sin, he says, "is imputed to his posterity because it is *their sin in reality*, though we may not be able to see the way in which it is so." (P. 440.)

Now, as far as I can understand all this,—which it is, perhaps, impossible to do, without the opportunity of putting some such questions as the following to Mr. Haldane—"What do you mean by being *guilty* of Adam's sin?" "or, by his sin being ours *in reality*?"—questions not unnecessary, since the term "*guilty*" has more senses than one, and sin may be ours in more senses than one,—the writer appears to mean that we actually and literally committed the sin of Adam, or ate the forbidden fruit, and *deserve* punishment on account of this our own act! and Mr. Haldane requires us to believe this, "as little children, on the authority of God." Now, I hope I can honestly say, I would do this, were I persuaded that it rested on the authority of God; but the question with me is, "Is it based on Divine authority, or has Mr. Haldane taught 'for doctrines' the explanation of a man?" It is to Scripture that my conscience is to be subject, and not to the conception which any man may form of its meaning. The Scriptures really say that by Adam "sin entered into the world,"—that many have died "through his offence,"—that "the judgment was by him to condemnation,"—that by his "disobedience many were made sinners," &c. &c.; and Mr. Haldane thinks that these declarations mean that we actually ate the forbidden fruit, (i. e., if I have not misconceived him,) and deserve to suffer punishment on that account. Others, again, with myself, exercising the powers which God has given to us, consider the meaning of the declarations to be, that all men were constituted sinners in the sense of legal exposure to the consequences of Adam's sin. Now, why may not we, as properly as Mr. Haldane, require others, and him among the rest, to receive *our conceptions* of the meaning of the inspired word, "as little children, on the authority of God?" If he can show any right to do this, we can possibly produce an equal right. The fact, however, is, that the right is possessed by neither party. We are all bound to form our own conceptions of the meaning of God's record. We act properly in presenting them to the minds of others,—in urging them, by all rational means, upon the acceptance of others; but what is it but Popery, in the Protestant camp, (where, by the way, it is too frequently found,) to call upon them to admit these conceptions, on the authority of God, as the undoubted meaning of the Holy Spirit?

Extremes often meet. Thus it is in the case of Messrs. Stuart and Haldane. Both agree in maintaining the position that, when a person is not truly and properly a sinner,—when sin is only *imputed* to him, or reckoned as if it *were* his,—he cannot be justly visited with the consequences of sin. Mr. Haldane avows this distinctly, and takes it as the basis of an argument to prove that we are truly *guilty* of Adam's sin. Mr. Stuart might possibly say that he means there cannot be proper *punishment* where sin is not *actual*, but merely *putative*. In fact, the current of his argument is, that *punishment* cannot begin before *crime*. But this appears to me mere logomachy. It merely goes upon the correct or incorrect use of a word, viz., whether the endurance by the race of the consequences of Adam's transgression (a fact over and over again admitted by Mr. Stuart) can be correctly denominated *punishment* to them. Suppose I should admit, as I freely do, that it cannot be so denominated, I would contend that Mr. Stuart has shut himself out from the possibility of deriving any advantage from this logomachy, by the very terms in which he has expressed the notion of original sin, which he sets himself to oppose. "Another theory is, that Adam's sin becomes ours merely as to the punishment due to it; i. e.," he adds,—and let the reader especially remember this, for the subsequent words are used as exegetical of the former,—“i. e., *his sin is ours simply and purely by imputation, or putatively, while the consequences of his offence are really and truly ours.*” (P. 520.) Now, this latter statement contains the proposition which Mr. Stuart ought to have set himself to subvert. He was bound to show that it is contrary to justice to allow the consequences of sin to overtake a man who is not really and actually a sinner. Mr. Stuart proves just nothing at all till he proves this; for to show, ever so satisfactorily, that he cannot be *punished*, is merely to show that a particular term cannot, in accordance with the laws of language, be properly employed to describe the facts of the case. I hope I may have misconceived Mr. Stuart, but the impression is forced upon my mind, that he does regard it as inequitable for the *results* of sin to attach where *actual* sin does not exist. Assuming this to be the case, I ask him to explain the facts referred to in a former page of this volume,—facts of every day occurrence,—to explain why the child is affected by the disease which resulted from his father's sin. I would remind him, and Mr. Haldane, of what has been previously stated, that it is an ordinary law of Divine providence,—i. e., in other words, of the Divine conduct towards men,—*for the consequences of moral actions to extend beyond the actors themselves*; and I would ask them whether this undeniable fact does not prove that it cannot be inequitable for the whole human race to suffer the consequences of the sin of its head, though that sin does not become, as it cannot possibly become, truly and really theirs? And to Mr. Stuart I would make my especial appeal, whether the facts of the case, with reference to the human race, as admitted by himself, do not force him from his position? What are those facts? Why, that *results* of the one offence,—which would have been, to Adam himself, *punishment*,—are experienced by all men—by infants, as well as others. But infants are not sinners, on Mr. Stuart's

principles, in any sense of the term ; yet they endure the consequences of sin ; for surely he will not deny that the loss of original righteousness, disease, suffering, and death, previous to the period when moral agency commences, are the consequences of sin. Mr. Stuart argues that it were unjust to visit an individual with the consequences of transgression where sin is merely putative ; but with great self-inconsistency, as it appears to me, he forgets, in prosecuting the argument, the fact, admitted by himself, that infants suffer the consequences of Adam's crime, though they have not, as he maintains, even putative sin. It would seem to be more difficult to Mr. Stuart to conceive that an infant, being a sinner in one sense of the term, should suffer the consequences of sin, than if he were a sinner in no sense at all !

On the whole, a regard to the interests of truth compels me to acknowledge, that increased familiarity with Mr. Stuart's writings does not exalt my conceptions of the value of his theological guidance. I am induced to think, since his character, talents, great and multifarious learning, must give him considerable influence with the Christian public of this country, that there would be rendered an important service to the church of God if some one, possessed of the necessary time and qualifications, would enter upon a thorough examination of all that Mr. S. has written on the great subject of the connexion of Adam with the race, and the doctrine of original sin.

The Rev. J. Gilbert, in a note appended to his valuable work on the Christian Atonement—a note which some will, perhaps regret to see—intimates that special and regenerating influence may be imparted to infants, without respect to the interposition of Christ. I am unable to conceive of this in harmony with our views of the Adamic dispensation, and the facts of the case. Was not the withdrawal from Adam of sovereign sustaining influence, one of the judicial consequences of his sin ? Is not the withholding of this influence from the race the result of that sin ? And, if this be true, how could there have been a return of this influence, either to Adam, or to the race, but on the ground of an atonement ? If, indeed, the deteriorated moral condition of the race were not the result of the "one offence," that condition might be improved without moral satisfaction ; but since it does spring from that source—and I assume this to be the opinion of Mr. Gilbert—how can a reversal, to the race, of one of the consequences of the transgression of its moral head, take place more easily, without an atonement, than the reversal of all those consequences ? It is worthy of inquiry whether the statements of this note are not at variance with the leading argument of the book.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

ELEMENTS OF MENTAL AND MORAL SCIENCE.

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ERRATA.

Page 37, line 9, for "was," read "is."

„ 40, „ 1, leave out, "on the part of God."

„ 78, „ 11, for "could bring," read "could not bring."

„ 112, „ 24, for "the sense," read "this sense."

„ — „ 25, dele the comma after "term," and insert one after "caused."

„ 152, „ 7, for "Staper," read "Stapfer."

„ 158, „ 22, for "M'Gee," read "Magee."

„ 234, „ 18, for "places," read "place. "

